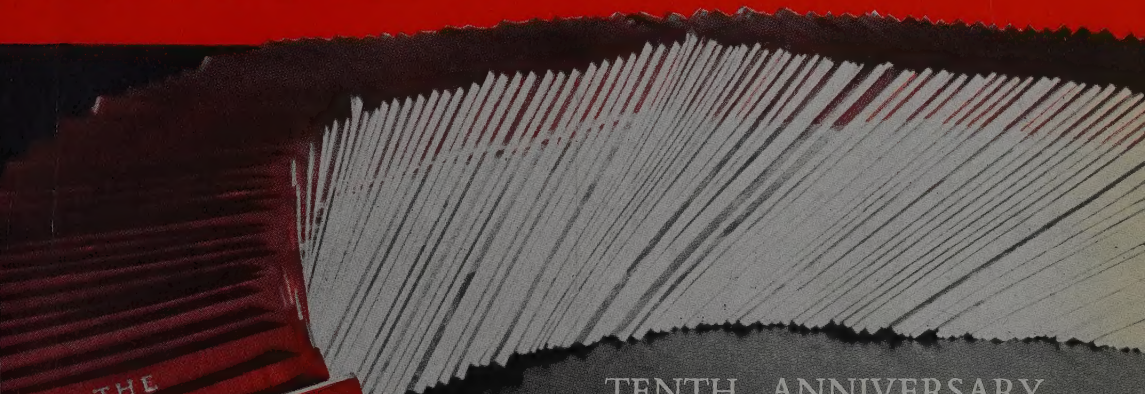


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TENTH ANNIVERSARY
NUMBER
1935—1945



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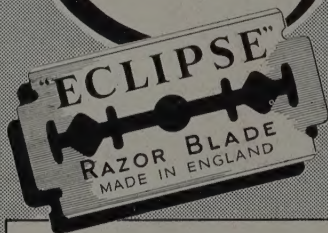
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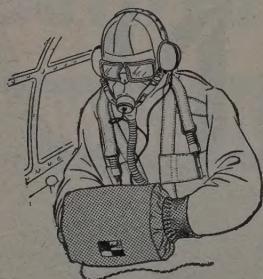
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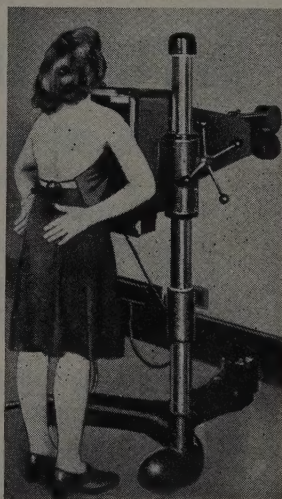


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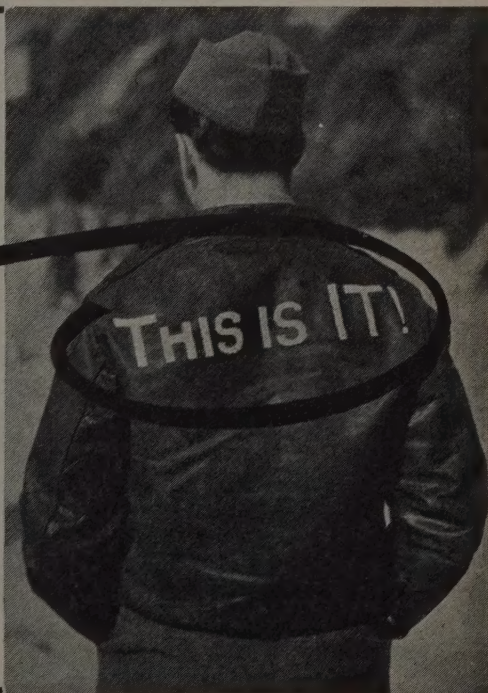
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Foreword

THE first number of THE GEOGRAPHICAL MAGAZINE appeared in May 1935. We believe our readers will agree that during the ten years of its existence, it has succeeded in developing a living character distinct from that of other magazines which are also concerned to depict the physical environment of human life.

In our first foreword we announced that it would be our aim to show the development of the earth as the workshop and playground of mankind. We have always held that this aim could not be achieved by restricting ourselves to any narrow interpretation of geography, and have regarded its range as extending not only to the material features of the earth's regions, whether of natural or of human origin, but also to those aspects of human society which, while influenced by physical environment, are the special province, for example, of archaeology, history, economics and architecture. Such an extension implies a study of the way man has responded to his environment, which can never be complete without the vision of the creative artist. To give the 'feel' as well as the 'facts': that is what the story-writer, the poet and the painter can do for us, and that is why we have on many occasions welcomed their contributions. We intend to develop this feature, and to print short stories, extracts from longer imaginative works, and reproductions of the work of artists which seem, in the fullest sense of the words, to interpret man's environment creatively to man.

Another new feature to mark our tenth anniversary will be the use of pictorial charts, which by visual interpretation can often clarify points and illustrate comparisons that do not so readily emerge from thousands of words.

So long as we are only allowed a third of our pre-war consumption of paper, the opportunity of introducing new features is small. They can, in fact, only be introduced at the expense of something else. But the examples in the present number will at least give a foretaste of the Magazine that we hope to produce, as war-time limitations are removed.

THE EDITOR

The Character of England in Maps. I

by EDWARD LYNAM, D.Litt., F.S.A.

Dr. Lynam, the well-known authority on maps, is Superintendent of the Map Room in the British Museum—which contains probably the largest collection of maps and charts in the world, ranging in date from the opening of the 12th century to the present day

A MAP is the "imitation and picture of the earth, with her partes knowen", and our early maps bring out vividly the manifold changes which successive centuries have wrought in the face of England. They are also themselves documents in the history of a technical art, examples of the work of notable surveyors, draughtsmen, miniaturists, writing masters and copper engravers who combined together in the past to make maps.

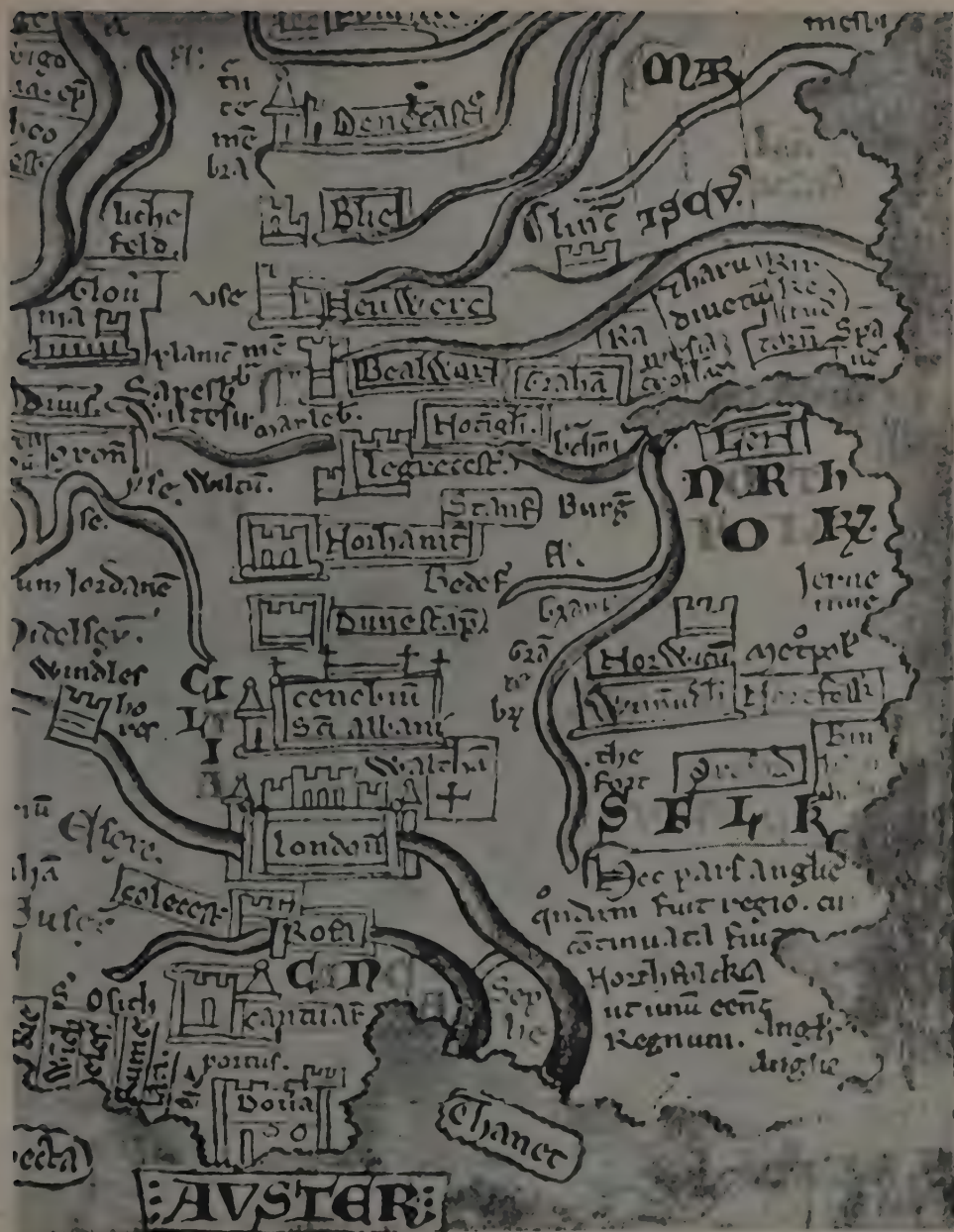
Our first scientific map-maker was the famous Benedictine, Matthew Paris of St Albans Abbey, who about the year 1250 had a map of Great Britain drawn, probably to illustrate his *History of the English People*. It is on cream parchment, the principal place-names are coloured red and blue and the surrounding sea green. Little battle-mented groups of upright buildings represent towns and winding blue ribands rivers, all childishly exaggerated but already in conception the cartographical symbols which were used thenceforth for centuries.

Though small and crude, this map shows what Matthew thought of most consequence in the England which he knew so well. They were the monasteries, towns, ports and communications. He lived at the end of the Golden Age of monastic life and culture in England; and ninety per cent of his little walled settlements represent monastic centres, isolated cells such as St Benet Holme (Holm), towns which had grown up around monasteries such as Peterborough (Burg), or cities like Leicester (Legrecest'), where there were several religious houses. Though the religious Orders were often harsh landlords in the numerous manors granted them by successive kings and nobles, they had done pioneer work in bringing waste lands under cultivation as at Thorney (Torn) and Crowland (Croilad), and in developing villages like Thetford and Wilton (Wiltu) into prosperous towns; and they had organized public educa-

tion and public charity all over the land. Everywhere abbots had emulated Carlyle's hero, Abbot Samson of St Edmundsbury, in devoting part of their revenues to founding and maintaining free schools, almshouses or 'hospitals', refuges for lepers and, near popular shrines like Canterbury and Walsingham and at crowded ports like Southampton and Dover (Dou'a), guest-houses for pilgrims. The best-built residences were the abbeys, and our loveliest heritage from the Middle Ages are the monastic churches and cathedrals and the books written and illuminated by Benedictine and Cistercian scribes.

Each of Matthew's towns has a fine red line over it, probably to indicate red-tiled roofs. This was a result of the recent laws to prevent fires, although houses were generally of timber and wattle and, in the country, thatched. In many the burgesses had already begun a successful struggle against their lay or ecclesiastical landlords for control of municipal affairs, especially of the dues levied on fairs, markets and manorial corn-mills. The wealthier citizens had formed *Gilds Merchant* which grew in power, Royal charters had been obtained for many towns, and craft-gilds of weavers had been founded in Stamford (Stanf), Nottingham (Notigh'), Oxford and elsewhere. Their democratic ideas were spread to the customary tenants and serfs of remote manors by travelling pedlars, new markets founded by Royal licence and improved communications strengthened their hatred of feudal tyranny; serfs fled and labourers migrated to the towns, willing to begin there a new life as 'foreigners'.

Of the ports shown here Lynn (Len), with the North Sea at its threshold, and East Anglia, the most densely populated area in England as its hinterland, was the most important. Yarmouth (Iernemue) was a great fishing centre, sending herrings both to London and inland for consumption on the



British Museum

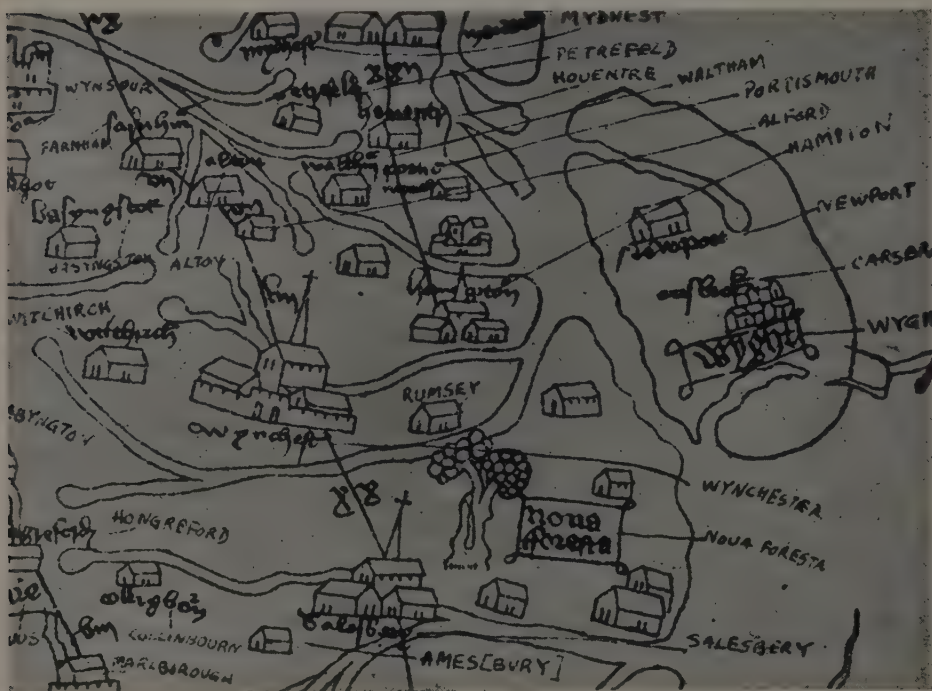
From a MS. coloured map of England drawn about 1250 for the historian, Matthew Paris. The shape of the country and position of towns were deliberately altered to make all ways lead to Dover

numerous fast days prescribed by the Church. Orford, as we know later from Chaucer's Merchant, was the chief port for the Flanders trade and had a strong castle to repel Dutch raiders—not always successfully. The Cinque Ports (Portus, Dou'a, Rume, Wicheles) transported Sussex iron and timber to other ports and supplied fighting ships for the King's service and convoys to protect merchantmen against French corsairs; and the sailors of Dartmouth and the west carried slates, tin and stone along the coast, brought wine from Gascony and made piracy a spare-time hobby.

Matthew had no room for roads, but he marks some focal points of road and river traffic, such as Boroughbridge and Ilchester. The English rivers were then even busier with small carrying craft than they had been in Danish times. Indeed this map was partly designed for travellers. Though it is oriented to the North, eastern and southern England were deliberately distorted in order to depict

the route from Doncaster to Dover and the best halting-places on the way as a straight line. Though they only numbered some three million souls, the English were already the 'restless English', and the road to Dover was generally thronged with a motley crowd of travellers, among them many a pilgrim bound, in holiday mood, for Compostella, Rome and the wide and wonderful world.

While Matthew Paris's map shows us England at the end of the period of monastic enterprise, the next map which has survived dates from the time when the towns had become leaders of progress. This is the anonymous 'Gough Map', probably drawn about 1340. It portrays an England unified by the national policy of Edward I, full of flourishing towns and stately cathedrals and abbeys. The towns are now pictured more artistically, and full of timbered houses with cream-washed walls and red-tiled roofs. The symbols too are differentiated, for while the spire of Salisbury cathedral is surmounted by a cross



Bodleian Library

From the anonymous 'Gough Map' of England drawn about 1340, probably for military purposes. It was the first road-map of any country after those of the Romans

and dominates the city, Abingdon and other monastic towns have smaller spires, ordinary towns like Amesbury are represented by plain houses, and Windsor and Carisbrooke castles by masses of crenellated towers. Many of the cathedrals, such as Lincoln and Gloucester, have roofs of blue lead, the sheets held in place by painted timber beams; both the rivers and the sea are green; and the New Forest (*Nova Foresta*) and Sherwood Forest are each symbolized by two slender green trees intertwined.

By 1340 the inhabitants of the towns—gilds and their members, apprentices, journeymen and shopkeepers—had begun to create a wealthy and independent middle class which eventually became the strongest and most national element in the country. Their town walls stood however not only for military defence but for a spirit of local autonomy which often set town against town. For example, after Salisbury was founded to supplant Old Sarum (c. 1220), Wilton, which had been a chief centre of the lucrative Wiltshire wool trade, lost to Salisbury both the majority of its customers and the advantage of the main western road, which was diverted. Naturally some bloody affrays ensued. Other towns had their vicissitudes. Edward I, a great builder of towns and roads, founded Hull (Kingston-upon-Hull), refounded Winchilsea on a safe height above the sea, and colonized Berwick with Englishmen against the Scots. Hull and Berwick became great ports, but Winchilsea, like Sandwich, though prosperous in 1340, was eventually deserted by the sea. Dunwich, marked on this map and once the rival of Yarmouth as a fishing port, was engulfed by the same sea. It is however as a road map covering a whole country that the Gough Map is unique both in English and Continental cartography. Although the highways between town and town are shown diagrammatically as straight lines, they are coloured red for clearness and the distances along them marked in Roman numerals. These distances were measured with extraordinary accuracy for their period, and were generally accepted for the next three centuries. Thus Farnham to Alton was reckoned as seven miles and Winchester to Salisbury as twenty down to about 1720, when the statute mile gradually superseded the long English 'customary' miles. The length of the customary mile varied in different districts, being generally greater in counties remote from London. Probably copies of this map were used by the provincial Commissioners of Array, employed, like Falstaff later, to recruit men for Edward

III's armies. Some of the highways followed the old Roman roads, but many, such as the London-Salisbury, were in part medieval. Their upkeep was a local responsibility, and their surfaces were correspondingly bad. In order to provide no lurking-places for possible highwaymen, and also perhaps to allow travellers to dodge the humps and holes, they were "fifty foot broad according to the law," and had 200 feet cleared of bushes on either side. Inevitably they invited encroachments later. Some of them may still be traced in our numerous 'green lanes'. Rivers were still preferred for heavy loads, and barges went up the Thames to Cricklade, marked on this map.

By 1450 the main principles of surveying and drawing maps were becoming known in England, though instruments and calculations were very inaccurate. A number of local maps appeared, generally drawn for municipal authorities or for landlords as evidence in lawsuits. We have a MS. map of the Hundred of Wisbech, which though dated 1597 is, to judge by its style, a revised copy of one drawn about 1450. Part of it shows the town of Wisbech and the surrounding country, with the Great River (Ripa) of Wisbech—the Nene—flowing northwards to the Wash. Each village was now represented by a church—which indeed had generally been its earliest stone building and was still the centre of its communal life. But the author of this map was, like his contemporaries, more of a pictorial artist than a scientist, and he drew no conventional churches but the actual buildings which he saw. His green trees, blue streams and dusty brown roads and his disregard of a scale are equally realistic. Wisbech Castle in the centre of the town and the manor houses, such as Fytton and Newton Hall, were also evidently true likenesses. The two peasants in Elizabethan costume were probably introduced later.

Gay and trim though the hamlets look on this old parchment map, each was the result of centuries of arduous labour spent in transforming vast reedy marshes, constantly flooded both by many rivers and the sea, into habitable and productive land. Long after 1450 the Fenlanders still lived largely upon waterfowl and fish, moved about in winter in boats, on stilts or on skates, and were considered "a rude uncivil people". They are now the most prosperous farmers in England. North of the Horse-Shoe a great salt marsh (*salsus mariscus*), often flooded, is shown, and the Fossatum Maris on each side of it protected all the adjacent villages, Leverington,

West Walton and the rest. Every village was obliged under very severe penalties to keep specified parts of the neighbouring dykes in repair and to pump away lying water by windmills. The roads ran along the top of the dykes, which provided a firm surface, and an early and charming example of ribbon building is seen beside the road (now the Waldersea Bank) west of Wisbech town.

West of Moorroe (Morrow) ran the very important High Fen Dyke, carrying a main road between marshes to Spalding in Lincolnshire. In the upkeep of this the villages concerned were greatly assisted by the Gild of the Holy Trinity at Wisbech. In the 14th century, largely in consequence of the rise of a wealthy middle class, there existed in nearly every English town one or more gilds or fraternities of pious laymen, formed to carry out charitable and public works. From their own funds they succoured the poor and the sick, assisted pilgrims on their way, organized village meetings in their halls or chantries, and also undertook the maintenance of local bridges, roads and, as here, dykes. In some respects therefore they supplemented the monastic grammar schools and almshouses, though their charity was more systematic than the monastic distribution of food to 'Friday beggars', while in others they performed many of the duties of a modern Urban District Council. Morrow Chapel was probably their chantry, saving the local people a long and muddy journey to Mass and serving as a festive hall for many a village 'church ale' and 'Whitsun ale'. During the Reformation most of the lands and chantries of these gilds

were shamelessly confiscated.

Down to 1500 the voyages of English mariners were mainly coastwise, from port to port, even when they sailed to Wisby or Lucca. They had no charts, only written descriptions of landmarks, courses, distances, shoals and harbours which had been handed down, with gradual additions and improvements, through successive generations of pilots and skippers. Eventually however the invention of printing: maps from engraved copper plates, which was made in Italy about 1473 and inaugurated a new era in map production, was applied to coastal pictures or charts. In 1583 a collection of these was engraved and published by a Dutch pilot, Lucas Waghenauer. An English edition, the *Mariner's Mirrour*, was speedily begun and came out in 1588, just in time for the Spanish Armada, and just when English enterprise and daring on the high seas had begun to startle the world.

This chart was designed to help the seaman in two ways. At the top (not shown here) is a silhouette or 'landfall' of the coast as seen from perhaps four miles away, with the prominent landmarks—windmills, beacons, lone trees, 'Feierley' (Fairlight) church, in fact the same objects as our fishermen take their bearings from now—clearly drawn. On the chart below are shown in plan the ways into harbours, with figures marking the depths in fathoms (probably at mean tide), little harbours and anchorages, with stippled areas for dangerous shoals. The importance of landmarks was officially recognized by the Trinity Brethren, and orders still survive

(Opposite) *From a map of the Hundred of Wisbech, dated 1597 but a century earlier in style. The dyke or embankment beside the River Nene carried a road.*

(Right) *From an engraved chart of the English Channel by Lucas Waghenauer of Brukhuisen, 1585. Shoals and shingle-banks are shown with depths in fathoms. Ships still carried cargoes up to Robertsbridge (Rhoter-bridg) and Appledore (Opletre)*



British Museum

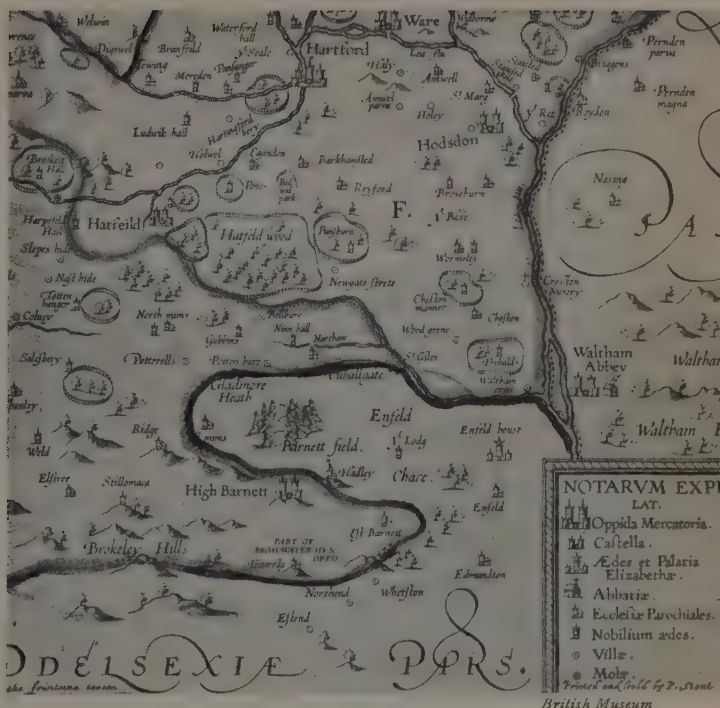
prohibiting farmers to cut down certain trees because they were landmarks for passing ships. All buildings are shown in elevation or upright for easier recognition, although the sea and land are in plan. The features here are in better proportion than on the early MS. maps, except the Southdown sheep and the rivers, which are purposely exaggerated. Even the stakes around the shinglebank (*cingels*) opposite Rye are clearly visible. The chart is of course the work of an engraver, but the engravers usually copied faithfully every detail, down to the writing, of the MS. draught given to them. So carefully indeed was this done that on a chart of Dartmouth harbour of c. 1602 we find the sailor recommended to anchor before the tavern! Rye and Winchelsea were still passable harbours in 1583 and small ships still went up the Rother to Appledore and Robertsbridge (Opletre and Rhoterbridg).

Cartographical science was founded in England in 1574-9 by the publication of

Saxton's magnificent engraved atlas of the country, the first national atlas in the world. Two Elizabethan surveyors as great as Saxton were Philip Symonson of Rochester and John Norden, who were also the first to mark roads on engraved county maps. Symonson's large engraved map of Kent (1596) depicts a country largely possessed by a new gentry whose eagerness for individual profits helped to destroy the old ideals of communal service. They had possession both of the monasteries, such as the Carmelite 'fryers' house at Aylesford and the Cistercian abbey at Boxley, and of the Norman strongholds such as Allington Castle, and had converted them into residences. Sir Thomas Wyatt, poet, was born at Allington. Note Symonson's picturesque symbol for castles. Portions of the monastic estates had also been acquired, through purchase or gift, by the Oxford and Cambridge Colleges and the London Livery Companies; and at Boxley is shown a farm which the Vintners' Company



(Opposite) From an engraved map of Kent, 1596, showing the roads, by the great Kentish cartographer Philip Symonson. The Medway is marked as navigable nearly to Allington Castle



(Right) From an anonymous engraved map of Hertfordshire, c. 1602. The first battle of Barnet (1455) is represented by a lively picture

owned until quite recently. Yet side by side with the new squirearchy commercial enterprise developed everywhere. At Outham and Loose the rivers Len and Beult were utilized to drive fulling-mills, for the manufacture of cloths was still England's greatest industry.

Towns like Maidstone were represented as on the Gough Map, with crowded red roofs, and a church was now the recognized symbol for a village. At the church door a curious new device had appeared, a tiny circle round a dot. This stood for the centre of the village, and all distances were measured from the dots or 'pricks'. Unlike Saxton, Symonson tried to draw his churches as they really were, and depicts in miniature Aylesford's square tower, the old wooden belfry at Detling and the lofty spire of All Saints at Maidstone. Otherwise he observes the newly established conventions for features on maps. All the bridges over the Medway and its tributaries are marked, and the point up to which the Medway was navigable for ships is indicated by a change in the delineation of the current. The heights (far too high) of the North Downs as well as the great woods of oak and beech on the Maidstone plain throw their shadows to the

east, as if the sun were in the west; and this is still the rule in portraying woods on maps. The roads were little kinder to travellers than in 1340, but—though Symonson's double lines do not prove it—they were now hedged in many places, for widespread inclosure of lands had brought in hedges, walls and fences all over the kingdom.

In 1593 John Norden introduced on his maps tables of special symbols for market towns, villages, mansions, mills and the like; and these, though greatly altered and expanded, appear on our Ordnance maps of today. In their early form they are well illustrated on a map of Hertfordshire of c. 1602. On the map itself we see too, in neat but fanciful hills with wooded slopes, the best that map-makers were able to do for a long time to represent relief; but from the dainty miniature of the battle of Barnet engraved here was soon evolved our modern symbol for a battle, two crossed swords. Typical of English maps—and of England—for the next two centuries are the numerous fenced parks of the gentry. Considerable portions of them had been formed by inclosures from the common lands.

Aksum: Sacred City of the Abyssinians

by P. P. HOWELL

IN northern Abyssinia, some twelve miles south of Adua along the Gondar road, is Aksum, city of the ancient Abyssinians. A small, ill-planned and indescribably dirty town, it retains its aura of sanctity and its unbreakable association with the past. Surrounded and intersected by avenues of stately sycamores, it consists of a disorderly mass of small stone houses, walled enclosures, stone monoliths, churches, a cathedral and a royal residence. It is inhabited by priests, monks, novices, cultivators, and makers of religious talismans.

It is a town of striking beauty, marred only by Italian structures of the most shoddy type and a modern market-place. Known as the 'Mother of Cities', it was in early times the capital of the Aksumite kings, and though it is no longer a capital it has never lost its religious importance or its fame.

It was occupied by the Italians, on October 14, 1935, it was administered by an Italian *Residente* and his staff. The spearhead of the British Army passed through it early in the spring of 1941 and Aksum returned to the empire of Haile Selassie after a period of foreign rule that was of negligible significance in its long history.

Aksum, said of old to be "distant from the

Red Sea five and forty Portugal leagues, or six or seven tiresome days' journey by reason of the Mountains that lie between", was recognized early in the Christian era as the central settlement of those Habashat peoples who had occupied the highlands of what is now Northern Abyssinia and Southern Eritrea. Its initial importance lay in its relation to the trade route from the Red Sea to the Kingdom of Sennar and thence to the primitive tribes of central Africa. Along this route came caravans bearing ivory, ebony, gold and ostrich feathers and other products, and from Aksum they were transported to the coast to supply the countries of the Mediterranean. The route and the commercial importance of Aksum is first mentioned in the *Periplus of the Erythrean Sea*, written in the 1st century A.D.

The earliest known peoples of the Abyssinian highlands were of Eastern Hamitic stock and had migrated there in successive waves over a very long period from the western parts of Arabia. In trading, in warlike expeditions and slave raids, these people had come into contact with the mixed Negroid peoples from the west. They were therefore of mingled blood even before the Semitic invasion which took place early in the 1st millennium B.C. The Semitic invaders, the majority of whom are known as Habashat, from which the name Abyssinian is derived, came from Southern Arabia and probably took the same route as the Hamitic tribes before them; but they came as conquerors and in no great numbers. They imposed their culture upon the indigenous people, but taking their wives from among them they soon lost their racial characteristics and were absorbed. The early Kingdom of Aksum was therefore predominantly a Semitic aristocracy living in close and interdependent association with the Hamitic tribes of the area.

The first years of their history are principally concerned with their relations with the parent Habashat tribes in Arabia, and their ultimate break-away from the suzerainty of their kinsmen across the sea. Thus in the

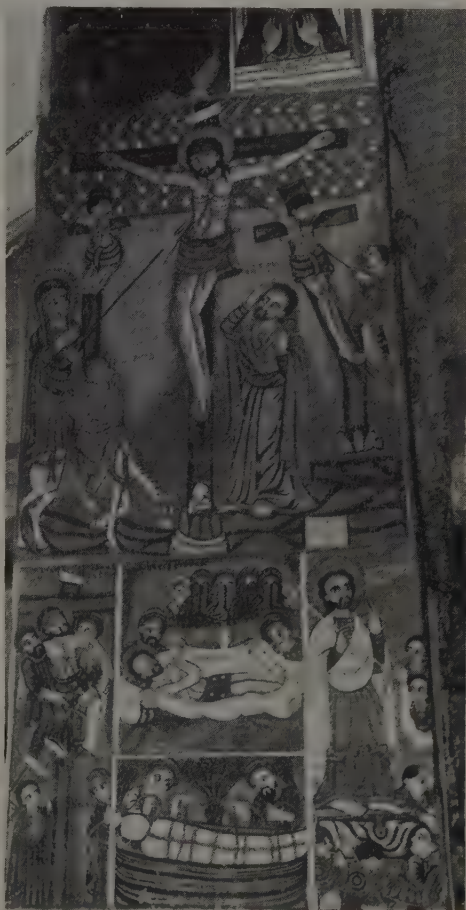


early stages of its development Aksum was little more than an outpost of the great Habashat Kingdom, whose heart lay in Arabia on the shores of the Red Sea, which dominated the ports and the coastal plain. Those Habashat who had come to the Eritrean and Abyssinian hills came as colonists, as merchants and with war-like motives. They soon monopolized and controlled the profitable trade with the tribes of the south and the west. Zoscales, that king "miserly in his ways and always striving for more, but otherwise upright, and acquainted with Greek literature", who is mentioned in the *Periplus*, was probably no more than a descendant of local governors and not of the dynasty which ruled the parent kingdom. By this time, however, the Aksumite colony had assumed independence and thereafter, until the advent of Christianity, the story of the kingdom is one of changing fortunes and the final predominance of its kings over the whole Habashat area.

Christianity came to Aksum in the 4th century, when churches and chapels were built on the foundations of pagan temples. During this century the Aksumite kings twice extended their rule to the shores of Arabia and twice were driven back. When hard pressed from the east, they turned their attention to Nubia and the countries of the west, where they attempted to establish their authority. At times their power waned, but they were never completely overrun nor did they lose their independence, for they could always retire into their mountain strongholds. For a long time a theoretical alliance with the Roman Empire was maintained, and in the 6th century A.D. Nonnosus, ambassador of the Emperor Justinian, attempted to negotiate a commercial treaty with the Aksumites against the Persians who were holding up their trade with India. This enterprise failed dismally, but Nonnosus visited the country and wrote a colourful description of the king's court. "Aksum", he says, "is a very great city, and as it were the Metropolis of all Ethiopia." Cosmas, writing in the same century, tells of the large-scale trading expeditions made by the Aksumites into the countries of the south and of their relations with the unfriendly and barbarous tribes of that area who brought

nuggets of gold to barter for cattle, salt and imported cloth.

This period of comparative peace and prosperity came to an end in the later years of the 7th century A.D. For a long time the Habashat peoples had controlled the Red Sea and had ravaged the trading fleets of other countries as they journeyed to India and the Far East to return laden with rich goods. There followed a temporary retaliation by the Moslem rulers who were rising to power in the north. Adulis was sacked and the peoples of Aksum driven into their mountain refuge. The Abyssinians suffered no permanent set-back and at times regained much of what they had lost, but the extent of their influence on the surrounding countries was curtailed. About the 10th century A.D.



Photographs by the Author

One of the spirited religious paintings, some old, some modern, on the walls of the Cathedral at Aksum



The gatehouse and garden in front of the Treasury at Aksum

another threat to their independence arose from the south-east, whence came a legendary queen with fierce warriors to lay waste their country from behind. There followed a dark period in the history of Aksum when enemies faced them on all sides and the power of the Moslem countries began to be felt.

The brief Zagwe dynasty which had risen to power in the middle of the 12th century was eventually ousted by a claimant to the old Solomonian line and the modern dynasty was established.

Then came the Abyssinian literary revival and the history of the country was recorded in manuscripts and confused pictorial representations. The 13th and 14th centuries, the time of the mythical Prester John—popularly supposed to be a Christian priest who ruled over vast domains in the east—are marked by a series of campaigns against the Moslem tribes who had begun to infiltrate into Abyssinia from the coastal plains. Fortunes varied but no decisive victory for either side was achieved and the Moslem tribes, principally Adelan, remained a constant threat to the kingdom. Internal strife was also common and quarrels raged between king and clergy. Aksum remained the capital and

the place of coronation, but the king rarely resided there.

During the 16th century the Portuguese began to show interest in Abyssinia, and in Europe the fame of the country spread as an isolated outpost of the Christian faith. There are accounts by missionaries who visited the country, and Aksum is mentioned many times as the home of the Abyssinian Church. In 1513 the Emperor of Abyssinia sent a diplomatic mission to the King of Portugal, headed by an Armenian of doubtful honesty. The compliment was returned when a Portuguese party under the leadership of Francisco Alvarez visited Abyssinia. Alvarez wrote a long and glowing account of Aksum and his travels through the country.

Amongst these peaks where we were still going, in the parts to the West are wonderful lands and very great lordships, among which is a very good town named Aquaxumo . . . we stayed in it for eight months by order of the Prester John. This town was the city, chamber, and abode (as they say) of the Queen Saba, who took the camels laden with gold to Solomon, when he was building the temple of Jerusalem.

Meanwhile the threat of an Islamic invasion from the south-east grew, and between



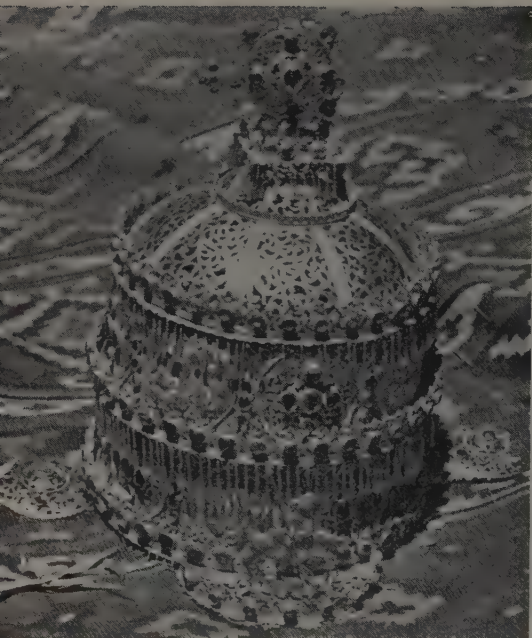
The Priests who guard the Treasury and tend the Cathedral

the years 1528 and 1540 the Adelan ruler, Ahmed Ibn Ibrahim el Ghazi, called Gran, who came from the Harar area, overran the country. He had gained the support of the Ottoman Sultan and laid waste the country, defeated the Abyssinian armies who were unused to powder, sacked the city of Aksum and destroyed the cathedral. The Kingdom had now reached its lowest ebb and was saved only by the intervention of the Portuguese. An appeal for assistance was answered by the arrival of a strong force under the command of Christophero da Gama, son of Vasco. Aided by the Abyssinian levies, the Portuguese conducted a strenuous campaign against the Mohammedan hordes and, though they suffered many misfortunes, including the death of da Gama, they finally succeeded in killing Ahmed Ibn Ibrahim and putting his armies to flight.

By the middle of the 16th century Portuguese influence was near its height and the Jesuit Missions, sent out to reform the National Church, were treated with such respect and reverence by Claudius of Ethiopia

as to arouse the jealousy of the Abyssinian clergy whose centre was Aksum. Had the Jesuits been less intolerant, less arrogant and more appreciative of the temperament of the people, the history of Aksum and of Abyssinia might be very different. It was Oviedo, a dogmatic, obstinate but valorous priest who sowed the first seeds of disruption and national dislike of foreigners. His successor was Father Peter Paez Castillan, a man of charm and intelligence whose understanding of the primitive mind was unusual in Europeans of his day. He did much to postpone the religious crisis which occurred after his death, fostered good relations between sections of the population, learnt their language and taught them much of European architecture.

Paez was succeeded by a man even less tolerant than Oviedo and the revolt against foreign influence came to a head during the reign of Susenyos. It was crushed, but Susenyos was compelled to compromise and allow complete freedom of faith and thought. The spirit of independence among Abyssinians was high even in those days. On the



Some of the Crown jewels of Abyssinia kept in the Treasury at Aksum: (above, right) crown of the Emperor John (1868-1889); (left) crown of the Emperor Menelik II (1889-1913). (Left) This is the crown worn by His Imperial Majesty Haile Selassie I before he came to the throne—not the Imperial Crown. (Opposite) The Royal Residence. During the Italian occupation it was used by the Residente of Aksum

death of Susenyos rebellion broke out once more and Europeans were martyred with traditional brutality. Those that escaped fled. A Mission sent out early in the 18th century failed to establish itself, and all attempts to bring Ethiopia under the Papal cloak were of no avail. "Thus fell the whole fabrick of the Roman Religion, that had been for so long rearing, with so much labour and expense."

* * *

The material background of Aksum is made up of an imposing array of monoliths, some standing, some fallen and in fragments or built into the foundations of later buildings. Outside the town is a stone on which



are Sabaeen and Greek inscriptions referring to the exalted dominion of Aizanes, a king who extended his authority far into Arabia and to the south and west. When he ruled Aksum, about the 3rd century A.D., the kingdom had reached the most outstanding period of its history. The great reservoir was built about this time and still supplies the inhabitants with water. On one side the tank is cut into the hillside, on the other confined by a raised bank lined with stone; water is fed to it through an artificial channel. It was rebuilt in the 15th century and was reinforced under Italian supervision shortly before the Italian invasion of Ethiopia.

The cathedral of Mariam Sion is the most outstanding of the 'sacred city's' many churches. Towering above a confusion of chapels, treasuries and outhouses, it is built over the remains of two previous buildings. The outer courtyard is strewn with the shattered remains of monoliths and other stone relics, and in the centre are four short pillars said to have been the support to the canopy of the Emperor David's coronation throne. The gateway is crowded with lepers and beggars, mostly women who may not

enter the sacred enclosure. This enclosure has always been a famous sanctuary, where outlaws and political offenders sought refuge from the vengeance of their enemies and the law. The interior decoration of the cathedral consists of a motley collection of drums and banners, and on the walls are spirited religious paintings, old and modern. Beyond is an inner chamber where no layman may enter, for within, it is said, are the remains of the Ark of Covenant brought by Menelik, son of Solomon.

Job Ludolphus, who published *A New History of Ethiopia* in 1682, describes Aksum from the accounts of travellers who saw the city after its sack by the armies of Gran. He paints a gloomy picture of the devastation. "The City itself, now totally ruin'd, looks more like a village than a Town of Note; so fading and inconstant are those things which men account most durable." He had not heard of the building of the present Cathedral and other religious houses during the reign of Fasiladas (1632-1665). Nevertheless Aksum had already lost its national importance as the Capital of Kings, for the Court moved to Gondar.

An Arabian Journey

by EDWARD BAWDEN

Some months ago the author as an official war artist accompanied members of a British Anti-Locust Mission to Arabia. But what he describes in his article is simply the things that were of interest to him personally: the things, as he himself has said, that he would care to write home about. The illustrations to this, as to his previous article on Iraq, are from his own paintings. This time we have been able to reproduce some of them in colour

SEEN from the air the coast of Arabia revealed a barren waste. It was like standing over a large map spread out on the floor in sunlight, the greater half coloured ochre to represent what seemed to be an almost featureless desert and the other half deep blue for the sea, the two parts joined by a sharp but fairly uneven line which might have been drawn by a pen. The town of Jidda showed as a hard, white shape against the tawny colour of the desert, no greenness of gardens or fields softened the contrast and the few isolated buildings did not blur the effect of its compactness: in the harbour were many small boats, and the minaret of a mosque drew attention by its similarity to a lighthouse. Rapidly the plane lost height and as rapidly the town gained in size. Now the plane dipped a wing as it flew in a circle over the airfield, and as I gazed down on Jidda I had the impression that a paper model on a drawing-board had been tilted up to show the distinctive buildings; then the plane swung down in a long sweep towards the landing ground, it touched the sand and Jidda fell away to a horizontal strip of walls overtopped by tall, narrow houses.

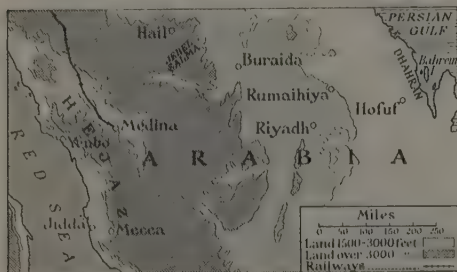
The local headquarters camp of the Anti-Locust Mission was in the hills fifteen miles from Jidda. In appearance it was similar to that of any transit camp in the Western Desert, but the setting had a grim character of

its own, seen against the morning or evening sun the low hills were like coal-heaps on railway sidings, nor at midday, when the light was overhead, did the leaden colour of the rocks, fused with dull red or grey-green, look at all gay. The rock was hard but loosely held in place, lumps of it could be broken off any of the numerous outcrops, and as a consequence the slopes were not excessively steep though the loose litter of sharp-edged debris made climbing hard work and the effort unwise in shoes soled with Egyptian leather. There was a sparse, not very lively growth of desert scrub now at its best because the rains had not quite ceased; and a few adult locusts with the distinctive yellowish-green colouring of the mating season taking quick, uneasy, darting flights whenever they happened to be disturbed.

The camp had been recently moved under the shelter of the low hills, because its former position on the open plain had given no protection against the frequent, sudden gales of wind. One of these swept over the camp while I was there. I was sitting in the tent when invisible hands took hold of everything and threw it out, clothes hanging on a line strung between the tent-poles passed over my head and many sheets of drawing-paper streamed away. Instantly the wind gathered strength. Ropes of sand swirled along the ground, rising into the air as the force of the wind increased: within the tent, sand piled up over the kit. One of the tent-poles snapped, a lucky fluke that saved the canvas from being blown away, as what remained standing rode the storm better since it acted no longer as a wind tunnel. For ten hours the storm was pretty violent and not every tent survived intact.

* * *

Jidda surprised and delighted me—it was so different from any other town I had seen in the Near East. The tall, narrow, tower-like



Stanford, London



Photographs from paintings by the Author. Crown copyright

The tall, narrow, tower-like houses of Jidda whose grouping and fine architectural beauty surprised and delighted the author

houses grouped together had a fine architectural beauty. The nature of the building materials used, the large blocks of coral rag for walls and the Javanese teak for window frames and shutters, produced a different type of house from anything that could be slapped up in mud or put together with bricks; it accounted for walls being nearly as massive as those of a 14th-century Florentine *palazzo*, it gave the surface an agreeable plain texture and the silhouette of the towers a sharp, crisp line, but it did not explain how good proportions and an elegance of detail had been achieved—unless it was due to the method of working, of varying a traditional style in accordance with the need, as well as allowing a building to grow in the hands of skilful workmen instead of making it conform to measurements upon a piece of paper. In

style these houses had a pleasant plainness; the ground floor was especially plain in character, conceived for strength and protection, yet the floors above as they rose one above the other progressively burgeoned into richer workmanship; carvings and mouldings on the elaborate window embrasures, window hoods with lace-like edgings, and screens of lattice in front of the four or five rows of sliding shutters made a pleasing, and in disrepair, as they more often were, a picturesque addition. These window embrasures projected from the wall surface singly, or a row of them might be joined vertically to rise like an organ loft to a frilly, pipe-like decoration at the top. Three, four, even five floors high, the houses stood alone or in groups, placed with a haphazard disregard of forming streets, but shutting in any number of narrow

lanes. It was exciting to stand on a roof at dusk and peer down into the lanes where a few dim figures moved in the gloom, and cries came up from below, a man urging on a donkey, the bark of a dog or a goat's bell tinkling. At first the setting sun touched the far-away hills, then the tops of the houses, but as the fringes of the golden curtain of light were pulled aside a silvery clearness was left in the air. Now the sky was drained of colour. For a time objects without shadows retained a ghostly semblance of form. Then night came on swift wings over the desert, and dropped, blotting the town in darkness except where a lamp over a doorway cast a feeble ring of orange light.

* * *

Plans had to be made for the journey across Arabia from the Red Sea coast to the Persian Gulf, and these depended upon making use of camps established by the Anti-Locust Mission. On the map a few short, straight lines might

be drawn linking Jidda, Yenbo, Hail, Buraida, Rumaihiya and Dhahran, but on the face of the earth these journeys from place to place were to be neither short nor straight. Mecca and Medina were out-of-bounds, and, perhaps a peculiarity shared by no other country, also the capital, Riyadh. Arabia is said to possess no rivers, nor by a stranger freak does it appear to have any roads. To travel by any other means than on foot or a donkey is by knocking about on a slow, bone-shaking camel, but the Mission had cars and they kindly lent one of them, together with the services of an Army driver, to the party of which I was a member, consisting of a journalist and a photographer. The two hundred and thirty miles to Yenbo could be done in a day. The track was no more than that made by the combined wheel-marks of other cars and that first taste of what travelling might be like made me keen not to retrace any part of a future journey; for most

During their journey across Arabia the author's party stayed in camps established by the Anti-Locust Mission. In this picture the chief Arab Guide and two corporals are resting in the camp at Jebel Salma



of the way the rough, bumpy ground threw us and our kit together intimately, with too infrequent 'breathers' as the car ran across stretches of firm gritty ground.

The camp at Yenbo was on a saltmarsh several miles from the town. Next day when Mohammed, my Sudanese man, came from Cairo, he was not very pleased to be turned into a sick-nurse. After five days in bed with malaria I was allowed to walk as far as the seashore where the long-legged crabs, spry creatures on the alert, held up their large claws in a defensive gesture if they were alarmed and scuttled off sideways on the other six. But the saltmarsh was a sad, desolate spot with little growing on the salty sand, except a few repellent shrublets and a kind of sea-lavender. The town of Yenbo also did not compare in size or interest with Jidda: it had a scattered, rather forlorn, secretive air within its walls. But it happened to look lovely as I was leaving it in the evening, a low-lying dark silhouette against the red bars of the sunset on the level, empty arms of the shore; in the lagoon outside the town one solitary living thing, a flamingo in the still, shallow water was fishing with decorum.

The track from Yenbo as it went inland to Hail passed through Medina, but the Mission had to avoid the Holy City and did that by making a detour to the north of it on a radius of twenty miles. By the direct route camels were said to take fourteen days: by the circuitous route used for vehicles it took five days. Arab Guides sat in the leading vehicle of the convoy, trustworthy men who had been appointed by King Ibn Saud to serve with the Mission, whose job it was to see that the convoy did not go astray and that no ill-feeling was shown by countrymen who had not met Europeans before. These Arab Guides were a fine set of men, of good physical appearance, in behaviour friendly and courteous, and several of them were attached to every camp under a Head-man or Emir. By using jeeps the five days between Yenbo and Hail might have been shortened, but we were with a convoy of 10-ton trucks carrying sacks of locust bait and supplies of rations, so necessarily the pace was not fast. It was difficult terrain and the heavily loaded vehicles had sometimes a spot of trouble on rock-strewn ground or loose sand; the track itself, hardly more than one in name, served no other good purpose than that, like an ever-unrolling ball of wool, the most devious coils of it could be followed as it twisted around the Hejaz hills. It was an early mountainous countryside, extremely wild and rocky, entirely arid, as desolate and forbidding as

though a great fire in a past age had burnt up every sign of life, leaving the piled-up rocks blackened by smoke or scorched to a dull red glow, with veins of vivid colour where the heat remained. The scenery had a grim sort of grandeur.

By the end of February Arabia was not blazingly hot; at midday the sun was warm but the nights got colder inland on the plateau two thousand feet above sea level. The weather was a surprise. In the first hour at Hail we were waiting hungrily for dinner when someone called out that a sandstorm could be seen. In the fading light a dark barrier was clearly defined against the dim smear of the sunset: it swept forward with lightning speed and I had a glimpse of what might have been the swirling smoke of a hundred rapidly moving bonfires. The tent rocked violently. The hanging lamp swung with an erratic motion and cast a spotlight that did a dance in the dense fog of dust. Heavy rain followed the blowing sand: then there was a lull. Flashes at night gave a foretaste of another storm. The tent partly came down. In the small hours the tent-pegs were wrenched again from the sodden earth, and it took three hours' work in an icy wind to save the tent. Then it was I noticed the ratel, or honey badger, sneaking for cover into a pile of stores, but for us with our beds on the ground the chances of a flood was a more anxious thought than the companionship of a very fierce little animal. Next morning the ratel was caught and put back in the box, in which, so it was hoped, it would travel to London as the first visitor of its kind.

Hail, unlike Jidda, was a purely Arabian town: in general appearance there was the greatest possible contrast. Jidda with its mixed Eastern population exhibited differences of dress; and an Indian influence, using the word in an inaccurate sense to include Java and Malaya, was traceable in the architecture—one instance being the bizarre ornamental vases on parapets and gateways. At Jidda, if foreign influences were reflected it suggested a certain amount of cosmopolitan freedom or laxity, but that is only what might be expected at the pilgrim port used by the Moslem world. Everything conformed to strict standards at Hail, foreign manners and ways were not welcomed, and as an indication of this we were asked not to be seen smoking in the streets. Therefore there was conservatism, noticeable at once in the architecture; the houses were of mud without the least trace of decoration, either in the use of fanciful details or with paint and carving. Mud has pleasing qualities when it

is recognized that its charm lies in its simplicity, in the 'batter' given to walls and in a fat, roundness of form allied to what can be modelled in clay by the potter's hand. Large-scale work does not detract from its merits, rather it enhances them. For size the most impressive buildings at Hail were the Emir's Palace and the Barracks, two enormous mud fortresses with towers; together they stood alone on the outskirts of the town, and looked magnificent from every view, especially seen against a range of bluish-black mountains that had a toothed edge as unexpected as the wavy red line of a seismograph. My only glimpse of the interior of the Palace was caught as we were being ushered to an upstairs room for an interview with the Emir's Deputy; as we were taken along a passage, up a stairway and across a landing I saw a courtyard dazzlingly bright with whitewash, exquisitely simple and clean. The small room in which the brief interview was given

was heavily carpeted, so too were the wooden pews around the walls; all else had a puritan severity, unless the words "made in Japan" in large letters on the calico stretched taut over the ceiling or a helmet of the same material hung around the top of a stout column could be called decoration, though it was decorative certainly. As the Emir was on a hunting expedition his Deputy agreed to send a wireless message, and two days later I was granted permission to make drawings in the town but not to do so within the Palace. While living in the town I noticed the slim pole of the aerial and thought it a strange, though useful anachronism to find in a place otherwise so lacking in Western amenities.

To live in an Arab household exercises the humdrum virtues of patience and forbearance. From five in the morning when flies begin to tease until nine or ten at night when the fire on the coffee hearth dies down the time passes with dignified slowness, punctu-

A panorama of the outskirts of Hail: to the left, beduin tents and date gardens—



ated by the passing of coffee cups and the hours for prayers, the two diversions. For the rest, like Mr Eliot's Gumbie Cat, one sits and sits, uncomfortably cross-legged, until the sitting part gets sore. Salem, the Arab Guide in charge of the Rest House, kept a strict eye upon me. I was not allowed to leave the house without having him as an escort. On a visit to the Camel Market, a very lively spot where every kind of animal is driven and humans foregather to gossip, I noticed that Salem bought at a shop a strong, whippy camel cane. He strode ahead of me, a lean, energetic little man scarcely five feet high, but I thought that his stride showed a determined jauntiness. On one side of the market-place were the towering ruins of the Palace of the expelled Ibn Rashid family—that, and the excitement of the market, was an attractive scene. After working for a short time I looked up to find myself walled-in by quite a big crowd, beautifully graded, the

smallest boys in front, taller ones behind and then the grown-ups—all of them silent with wonder! It seemed a shame to make an impatient gesture of annoyance. Then Salem, like a wicked fairy with a wand, sprang into action and whipped the people from my line of vision as though they were a number of intractable camels. This disgraceful clearance had to be made so frequently that I did not care to repeat my morning's experiment elsewhere in other crowded parts of the town.

Hail lay to one side of the plain where the hills on each side came near enough to make a bottle-neck half a dozen miles wide. On the side of the town that faced the range of bluish-black mountains with the fantastic, serrated line of peaks there was an open expanse of sand, but behind, beyond the Camel Market, the town ended with houses scattered among the date gardens and fields; and these shaded off towards the slopes of hills,

—to the right, the castle on the hill; and behind all the distant range of mountains



while a broad green band of them flowed up a valley out of sight. Whenever I took a walk near the gardens I always heard the creaking of pulley wheels on the scaffolding above one of the many wells. Usually a pair of camels would be doing the work. The goatskins were drawn to the surface as the camels walked down a steeply inclined ramp contrived to lessen the labour of pulling; as they turned at the end of their walk the goatskins were tipped into a trough (covered with branches of palm to prevent splashed water being lost), and from the trough the water ran into an irrigation channel feeding the fields; then as the camels walked back up the inclined ramp to the well-head the empty goatskins went down on slackened ropes. Another common sight were small encampments of beduin living in black camel-hair tents, and these, without the need of making an inquisitive inspection, looked as if the domestic life in them might be squalid.

At Jebel Salma, thirty-five miles from Hail, there was an operational camp belonging to the Mission. In tents pitched on the Emir's grazing-ground some Sudanese, Palestinians and Syrians were living under the charge of a British corporal. Besides liking the friendliness of the camp I found the scenery attractive. Two miles away ran the cliff-like escarpment of a line of hills, in the main a fine tumble of giant boulders and unscaleable, smooth rock surfaces. That was not very extraordinary; the surprise was the occurrence of clear running water, icy cold. The spring rose in a tiny cup-shaped valley higher up; the rivulet then percolated through the hillside and dropped as a miniature waterfall into a series of rock basins, and trickled away among lush herbage to disappear in the sand less than a hundred yards from the foot of the rocks. A bathe in this icy water was not repeated. Animal and plant life was abundant, birds were numerous: gazelles, jerboas, ravens and eagles could be seen. One evening at supper we were surprised by swallows being very energetic overhead; then it was noticed that termites were taking the connubial flight, but every time the feebly-flying insect managed, after a fussy hesitation, to get into the air it was caught unerringly by a beak that snapped to with a click. Next evening a gathering of dragonflies repeated the performance of the swallows, though it was impossible this time to detect the victims. And again on the third evening wagtails came in their turn and were busily intent upon clearing the ground of something.

From Hail to Rumaihiya was five days by car, broken by one day spent at Buraida. This

stretch of countryside was open, undulating desert, the travelling across it made easier by firm stony ground and less often difficult by patches of loose sand. Of Buraida I have only a faint memory. We were conducted through the market-place and several of the streets, followed by an unusual number of boys of all ages, who turned up again next morning in such an uncontrollable herd that the photographer came back in despair. One street I did remember, a covered bazaar where branches of palm had been used to provide a very pretty arbour 'ceiling'. The natural setting of Buraida had one peculiarity; on the top of bare whale-back sand dunes were clumps of pines, or so they seemed to be seen from a distance; and this has left a picture in the mind of dark-green on light-coloured sand, the first thing that I saw coming into the town and last seen upon leaving it.

Before getting to the camp at Rumaihiya climbing an escarpment gave the trucks some trouble, and us some time to admire the great projecting slab edges of rock overhanging the plain from which we had ascended. Past the camp at Rumaihiya three days were needed to plough through more than a hundred miles of loose sand. It offered little of interest to a person who was not driving a car; a poor, sparse scrub grew on the sand, even a few flowering plants such as a minute white scabious, but of wild life only colonies of large, green, dragon-like lizards, called in Arabic *dhabb*, that fled to their burrows, and in doing so held horizontally stiff a long, notched tail. All the way from Buraida to Dhahran seemed to me to be intensely boring.

By now we were in a hurry to leave Arabia. Personally I felt that a few days of comfort would not come amiss, that it would be a desirable change to sleep in a bed, drink fresh water, eat something different from bully and biscuits, to have enough cigarettes, above all to enjoy the privacy of a room and the comfort of an easy-chair. And, only twenty miles of the sea separated us from some of these normal, everyday comforts: "I wish I were coming with you, Sir," said the driver of our car.

The sea trip to Bahrein had to be made in a launch operated by a motor and aided by a sail, a combination of driving forces which in a strong wind ensures as much pitching and tossing as an unseaworthy person can want. As I climbed onto the cabin roof and clung on there for three nasty hours I looked back at Arabia, a low strip of sand, and wondered if I should be able ever to return. I knew that I had seen only a very little of the secretive life of that harsh land.



Paintings by Edward Bawden. Crown copyright

The Emir of the Guides at Hail





(Opposite, top) *The Emir's Palace and the Barracks at Hail, "two enormous mud fortresses with towers; together they stood alone on the outskirts of the town, and looked magnificent from every view."* (Bottom) *Searching for water in the mountains. "A countryside . . . entirely arid, as though a great fire in a past age had burnt up every sign of life, leaving the piled-up rocks blackened by smoke or scorched to a dull red glow, with veins of vivid colour where the heat remained."* (Above) *British Consulate, Jidda. "The floors . . . as they rose one above the other progressively burgeoned into richer workmanship, carvings and mouldings on the elaborate window embrasures, window hoods with lace-like edgings and screens of lattice in front of the four or five rows of sliding shutters."*



In the camel market at Hail. "A very lively spot where every kind of animal is driven and humans foregather to gossip. . . . On one side were the towering ruins of the Palace of the expelled Ibn Rashid family"



King Ibn Saud's representative at Rumaihiya. Hunting-hawk and wall of petrol-cans; coffee-pots of immemorial pattern and modern tin kettle; the centuries coalesce in Saudi Arabia

Edward Gibbon's Grand Tour

by D. M. LOW

IN the middle of the 18th century a young Englishman of property who had not travelled was imperfectly qualified for a place in the narrow worlds of society and, perhaps, of government. The corollary of this usage was that the youth must travel as a man of fashion, associating on his journeys exclusively with men of his own or higher rank, and expecting to mingle in an equivalent society in the countries which he visited.

Although Gibbon as a young man was determined to go to Italy, "a country which every scholar must long to see", he was true to his age and his class in having no other conception of the style in which he should travel than as a young man of rank. At the same time he had no intention of going before he was prepared to understand what he was to see. When his father had had the economical idea of sending him from Lausanne into Italy at the end of his first stay there, Gibbon had replied with all the wisdom of eighteen, "I never liked young travellers; they go too raw to make any great remarks, and they lose a time which is (in my opinion) the most precious part of a man's life." At the close of the Seven Years' War, however, the situation was different. The captain of militia, now aged twenty-six, was arguing with equal astuteness that the man who did not travel young ran the risk of never travelling at all. His father, who had been eager to put down £1500 for the pleasure of seeing his son in Parliament, agreed after some bargaining to turn him loose abroad for some two years, supplementing his annuity of £300 with sums roughly amounting to the rate of £700 a year. On these terms Gibbon set out on January 23, 1763. He crossed the Channel, a nine hours' voyage, with some young noblemen who, like scores of other Englishmen, were seeking the Continent with that eagerness which always recurs at the close of our long wars. From Boulogne he went on alone, reading a Latin book of travels in the Near East.

The fourteen months which Gibbon spent in France and Switzerland before he crossed

the Alps were not so much an adventure abroad as a home-coming for him. Though he had not seen Paris before, it was, in the modern phrase, his spiritual home. In his first three weeks there he heard more memorable conversation and met more men of letters among the people of fashion than he had encountered in a greater number of months in London. To sustain a due balance between the two worlds of fashion and learning was with him a lifelong preoccupation, in some ways an amusing foible, in others a fundamental and indeed valuable quality of his mind. The hospitable salons of Paris showed him, for the moment at any rate, his ideal of society. Any night he could drive out in his coach—"a very elegant vis-à-vis"—from the rue du Colombier, faubourg St Germain, with at least one, and at times three invitations at his choice, to houses where he would meet such men as Diderot, d'Alembert, Helvétius and d'Holbach. Fourteen weeks thus flowed very agreeably away, and he was inclined to prolong his stay. With his coach alone costing sixteen guineas a month and other expenses in proportion, with the temptation to buy clothes—"I am sorry to find my English clothes look very foreign here"—his purse at last warned him that it was time to move on. By May he had reached Lausanne, intending to spend two or three months of retrenchment there and to finish his elaborate digest of the geography of ancient Italy.

Eleven months were to elapse before Gibbon could disengage himself from the less brilliant but easier society of the Pays du Vaud. There were not only his old friends, but a host of young Englishmen coming and going on the tour, always men of fashion, and sometimes military men as well, an important point for the captain; good-natured companionable fellows for the most part, and often incorrigible wasters of time. Amid such company winter drew on and the spring was awaited without undue impatience to melt the snows on the passes. He was reading hard too. In writing home to justify his delays and



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A view of Paris in the latter half of the 18th century looking downstream towards the apse of Notre Dame. On the right bank can be seen the old houses of Le Marais, once an aristocratic quarter. Gibbon stayed in the Faubourg St Germain on the left bank. Years later in his History he paid tribute to the city as the centre of the arts of life

expenses he dwelt with justice on his industry and hinted that he hoped some day to produce something that would satisfy himself and interest the public. For some years he had been avowedly looking for a suitable historical theme. When, however, he stood at the foot of the Alps with all his knowledge of antiquity in his head and his closely written folios of notes in his baggage, he had formed no clear notion of his future work, least of all of anything on the scale of *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*.

Few aspects of manners separate the 18th century from our own times so decisively as those concerning travel in southern Europe. In the earlier age the tour was essentially a young man's enterprise, and one which he could not expect to undertake more than once. Female or elderly tourists were comparatively

rare. Though not a dangerous adventure, it needed circumspection. Rough travelling was to be expected. The climate was viewed with obstinate suspicion. Certain regions held peculiar perils, such as the 'Serana' or evening dew of the Roman Campagna. Men were advised not to travel in large parties for fear of exhausting the wayside accommodation; on the other hand, for safety's sake they should not go singly. If highwaymen were rare, robbery and even murder in the inns were real dangers, and the guide-books recommended an 'iron machine' to bar the bedroom doors in the general absence of locks. Statistics of such crimes are perhaps irrecoverable. At least one recalls the fate of Winckelmann, the historian of ancient art, who in 1768 was murdered by an Italian in a Trieste inn after rashly showing some valu-

ables. Such considerations in varying degrees sent the young men travelling in their own or hired chaises, with servants and heavy baggage, including bedding and sometimes cooking utensils—a style which tied them to the main posting roads, and kept them from almost all contact with the population. In this way social prestige and curiosity were alike satisfied.

William Guise, “a Sir John Guise of Gloucestershire’s son”, had been chosen for a travelling companion. Although not a profound scholar, he was, Gibbon noted, “a very sensible well-bred man”. With the first coming of spring the two men left Lausanne, and on Wednesday the 25th of April 1764 they crossed the Mont Cenis pass and reached Susa. Gibbon was carried over on a low chair by four men. Guise had wanted to venture himself on a mule, but thought better of it. It is not recorded how he went finally. Snow twenty or thirty feet deep lay on either side of the path, reminding Gibbon of an iced cake. Once the summit was passed the snow almost disappeared, a sure sign that they were in Italy. The day was fine and Gibbon enjoyed “a most romantick variety of prospects”, all the more for knowing that there was no danger, he frankly added. The previous evening as the pass was approached at Lanslebourg the grandeur of the mountains had affected him with “an agreeable melancholy”.

This unique occasion may be said to have aroused in Gibbon a livelier feeling for mountain scenery than he commonly acknowledged. Although throughout his writings he reveals a sure eye and a concise touch for landscape of every sort, his enthusiasms are reserved for the kinder and, above all, the cultivated aspects of nature. In this respect he was closer to the spirit of Latin poetry than to our romantics. “Every traveller”, he was to write in *The Decline and Fall*, “must recollect the face of Lombardy”; so deep was the impression that its well-ordered fertility had made on his own mind, and his diary notes that his progress across it was less a journey than an agreeable promenade. To him as to the invaders of the Empire Italy was the garden of the world, and the age-long neglect, under which some tracts of it lay, was, he thought, less tolerable than the calamities of war. Profoundly as he was to be stirred by the relics of ancient civilization, he had no sentimental relish for ruins and desolation as such. The keynote of his outlook on the world, ancient or modern, lies in a remark in his *History* where he says that “if we are more deeply affected by the ruin

of a palace than by the conflagration of a cottage, our humanity must have formed a very erroneous estimate of the miseries of human life”. A similar reflection in his journal dwells on the vanity of courts which exist at the expense of the people’s prosperity. The picture of the poverty-stricken villages of Piedmont arose in his mind when he was alternately bored and amused by the formalities of the petty court of Turin.

Life in Turin presented stock features of the Grand Tour which recurred in varying form in one city after another. The new arrivals were promptly visited by ‘the Nation’ in the persons of Mr Ponsonby, Lord Berkeley, Mr Dobson and a Captain Atkins. The British envoy presented them to the court and to society. They took Italian lessons with an abbé. Their days were given to orthodox sightseeing, and to the equally orthodox task of recording impressions and facts, these latter often transcribed from guide-books, in the journals which were to be handed in at home as evidence of time and money properly spent. In this way the dimensions of churches and the strengths of battalions were impartially set down. While Gibbon joined his companions in all excursions except those on horseback, one does not suppose that they took part in his learned interviews with M. Bartoli and other savants. There are, however, singularly few references to ancient history in Gibbon’s journal at this stage. On the whole, the scholar seems to have yielded place to the man of fashion, and the man of fashion to have found himself the sport of circumstance in more than one way. In the first place Gibbon was now for the first time since boyhood a real foreigner on the Continent. Although he could read Italian, he was never to attain facility in speaking it. Furthermore, the frigid and inaccessible quality of Italian society proved a baffling contrast to the easy ways of Paris and Lausanne, and evoked some petulant comments. Lastly, time and money were lost for want of following a settled route.

From Turin Gibbon and Guise went to Milan. It was their intention to go thence to Venice for the festival of the Ascension, one of the great social occasions which the guide-books recommended, which was to be especially brilliant that year for the presence of the Duke of York. They were deterred by mounting expenses, and turned westwards to Genoa with the purpose of making Lerici by sea, and so on to Florence. Time was lost in Genoa waiting for a favourable wind until, losing patience, they turned back once again across the mountains and the plain to

Bologna. Bologna deserved a longer stay than could now be afforded. It was high time to push on to Florence. Gibbon's letters and journal yield some vivid glimpses of this rather incoherent stage of the tour: of Gibbon tapping his snuffbox,—his mannerisms were already formed—in familiar converse in French with the princesses of Piedmont; spending twenty-four hours in the rain on Isola Bella; viewing with expert eye the Baden-Baden regiment at Milan; of Guise climbing the colossal monument to S. Carlo Borromeo which still dominates the scene at Arona. We see them at Genoa disturbing the worshippers in a church while they trained their glasses on the pictures; sheltering from a thunderstorm and commenting on the good-humour of the barefoot Ligurian peasants; posting from town to town along the Emilian Way in the cool of the June nights; arriving at Reggio in time to send out for dominoes for the assembly. On the 19th of June they crossed the Apennines again, arrived in Florence at half-past nine and put up at Charles Hatfield's house which had a great reputation with the English.

Florence was the social climax of the Grand Tour. It was the centre at which all the travellers assembled sooner or later, and the clearing-house for the exchange of experiences. Here, too, was a permanent English society, not without its eccentrics of both sexes which have seldom been absent from the city in the course of three centuries or more. The presiding genius of this community was Sir Horace Mann, the British minister to the court of Tuscany, in virtue of which office for some thirty years his chief duty was to look after successive generations of travellers, introducing them to Florentine society, and on occasions getting them out of scrapes.

Mann kept open house for the Nation in Via S. Spirito, and the young travellers made full use of what they pleasantly called 'The King's Arms'. His box at the opera was at their disposal, and on an August evening he gave a party in the courtyard of his house which was illuminated and hung with tapestries, while "there were plenty of refreshments and the scene was enlivened by several French horns posted in the garden". It was possible in this way to make some acquaintance with Florentine society. The language, however, remained an obstacle, and the baffling institution of the *Cicisbeo* or *Cavaliere Servente* prevented the ready formation of friendships with the ladies. Towards the end of his stay Gibbon was attracted by Mme Gianni—a suitable object for a

historian's attention, for she was born a Medici.

Although Florence was to provide no such dramatic moment of inspiration as Rome held in store for Gibbon, nor was the visit to bring to fruition his early design of a history of the Medici, the influence which the city exercised over him should not be underrated. He tells us of the awe with which he entered the Palazzo Riccardi where the great scholars of the Renaissance had enjoyed Lorenzo the Magnificent's patronage. The revival of letters and of the spirit of free inquiry were earlier and perhaps dearer themes for Gibbon than the fall of the Empire, and are implicit in the texture of *The Decline and Fall*.

It was in this spirit of historical recollection that he beheld the traditional public entertainments—the race of unmounted horses through the Corso and the chariot races in the Piazza S. Maria Novella. His shrewd eye did not miss the somewhat shabby details—the old English horse which was generally expected to win the former; the fact that the competition in the chariot races was nominal since the horses all belonged to one jobmaster; the vivacious crowds docilely taking the buffetings of the Austrian soldiers. At the same time he reflected that these shows were of venerable antiquity and cherished by the people as the sole relics of their pristine liberty, which, since the ancient games, were perhaps the only example of the pleasure of a whole state gathered for amusement by the care and under the eyes of its magistrates.

September came. The great heats of the summer were over. "Rome, the great object of our pilgrimage," was now accessible. On the 22nd Gibbon and Guise left Florence and "the sharp and barren ridge of the hills of Faesulae". Their route lay through Pistoia and Lucca and "the solitude of Pisa" to the busy mart of Leghorn; thence across the "dreary unwholesome uncultivated Maremme of modern Tuscany" to Siena. Here they fell in with Lord Mount Stuart who took them to an assembly, where Gibbon noted that "the women were so ugly and the men so ignorant that I had not the slightest desire to stay in a town whose society I had heard praised so much". On the 1st of October they had reached Viterbo after passing through country which Gibbon described as really frightful. He had never seen barer or more unproductive mountains. The final stage deserves quotation in full from his journal translated from the French:

Tuesday 2nd. The Campagna of Rome! A beautiful plain once the mountain of Viterbo is



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The river Arno at Florence with the Ponte S. Trinita in the foreground and the Ponte Vecchio beyond, a scene that until the present war had hardly changed since Gibbon's day. In the 18th century the Ponte S. Trinita was a fashionable rendezvous on summer evenings

passed. It seems in this country that the more nature has done for men the more they neglect her gifts. We reached Rome at five in the evening. From the Pons Milvius I was in a dream of antiquity which was only interrupted by the customs officers, a very modern race who obliged us to go on foot to look for a lodging, for there are no inns, while they took our chaise to the customs house. The approach to Rome is not pleasing.

Reflecting on the earlier stages of his tour in his Autobiography Gibbon wrote that "the pleasing vision cannot be fixed by the pen; the particular images are darkly seen through the medium of five and twenty years". The entry into Rome was another matter. After all those years he could neither forget nor express the strong emotions which agitated his mind as he first approached and entered the eternal city. "After a sleepless night," he

recorded, "I trod, with a lofty step, the ruins of the Forum; each memorable spot where Romulus stood, or Tully spoke, or Caesar fell, was at once present to my eye; and several days of intoxication were lost or enjoyed before I could descend to a cool and minute investigation." Thirteen days later, on the 15th of October, came the equally unforgettable moment when, during vespers in the Ara Coeli church, there started to his mind the idea of writing, not yet *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, but that of the decay of the great city—for the moment a sufficiently overwhelming theme.

The view which Gibbon surveyed from the Capitol was one which did not change in essential features for more than two hundred and fifty years from the middle of the 16th century. It had been seen by Rabelais; it was to inspire the romantic reveries of Goethe



(Above) The Campo Vaccino about 1760 covering the remains of the Roman Forum. In the background is the avenue of trees leading to the Arch of Titus which is overlaid with medieval fortifications. (Below) The Piazza del Popolo was the normal entrance to Rome in pre-railway times. The scene depicted here with the Egyptian obelisk and the 17th-century churches has altered little during three centuries





Prints from Rischgitz Studios

(Above) The Pantheon constructed about 27 B.C. is the only ancient building in Rome which, apart from decorations, survived in modern times intact. The roof is a single mass of concrete with a circular aperture lighting the interior. Below: A view of the Grand Canal at Venice. The Rialto can be discerned in the distance. The ornamental gondolas and figures in dominoes indicate a time of carnival such as Gibbon hoped to witness

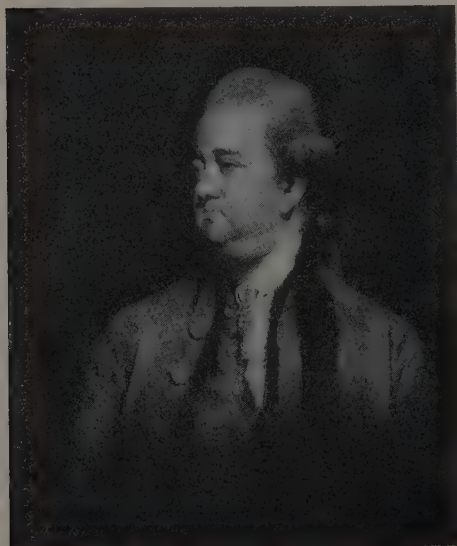


and Byron. In the foreground were the arch of Septimius Severus and the three columns of Vespasian's temple half buried in the encroaching soil. In the distance loomed "the massy greatness of the Coliseum" defying time and the destroyer. In between, from Severus's arch to that of Titus, lay a straight avenue of trees which appears in all the engravings of the 17th and 18th centuries, and survives even in a photograph taken in 1871. The rest of the Forum to the slopes of the tree-covered Palatine was a grazing ground and had in fact come to be known as the Campo Vaccino. Not only was the Forum buried and its name nearly forgotten—it is scarcely mentioned in contemporary guide-books—but considerable doubt had arisen regarding its exact position. This doubt sprang up after 1536 when a triumphal road had been laid across the Forum and the whole area had been filled in and levelled. From that time no useful discoveries could be made until the rubbish was cleared away in the 19th century. Meanwhile an erroneous theory won the day by which the Forum was located between the Capitol and the Palatine, more or less on the site of the Piazza Consolazione. It is significant that Nardini's description, on which Gibbon relied, had been published in 1666

and was reprinted at least as late as 1818. The plan in that last edition still gave the wrong site for the Forum. In view of this general neglect it is almost a note of distinction in Gibbon's scholarship that he even claimed to have walked over the Forum. It would be rash to assert that he was deceived about its site by Nardini. But his eager identification of spots associated with Caesar and Cicero are no more than the expression of his intoxication. The critical thoroughness with which he subsequently explored the city is revealed in the final footnote of *The Decline and Fall* in which, with the insight of historical genius, he outlined the principles on which the topographical study of Rome should be based; principles which were adopted and brilliantly exploited by a host of scholars in the 19th century.

Gibbon had been content for Guise to climb the saint's monument at Arona alone. Within a few days of his arrival in Rome he himself had scaled the 140 feet of Trajan's column, and standing by the statue of St Peter, which had supplanted the emperor's, had more coolly surveyed the ancient city. This rare exertion was a more striking and, in its way, a more authentic feat than his heady progress through the Forum. It is one of the few details of his day-to-day life in Rome that survive. In his Autobiography he sums up his visit by saying that his conversation was with the dead rather than the living, adding the odd statement that the whole college of cardinals was of less value in his eyes than the Transfiguration of Raphael or the Apollo of the Vatican. The fruits of his intense study and acute observation are in his History, especially in those closing chapters in which, after his long journey through time and space, he comes back to his favourite themes of the Renaissance and the grandeur of Rome. In those final pages there is the personal touch of one revisiting in imagination the scene of his youthful inspiration. He recalls the eagerness with which he approached St Peter's, a building which had his unrestrained admiration, notes that the women across the Tiber still preserved the antique cast of countenance and deplores the stagnation which had settled on the life of the city compared with the foaming torrent of politics in the ancient days.

The dream of antiquity was interrupted by matters more vexatious than the customs officials at the Pons Milvius. Letters from home about the estate caused Gibbon extreme alarm. Next through some muddle his credit in Italy was stopped, though only temporarily. It would seem, too, that there



From the Author

Edward Gibbon (1737-1794) after the portrait by Reynolds. Perhaps alone of our great writers he was equally at home in England and on the Continent



Fletching Church near Sheffield Place, Sussex. Gibbon's tomb is in a transept which was converted into a private mausoleum for the family of his life-long friend Lord Sheffield

Rischgitz Studios

was a limit to the impressions which even his eager mind could usefully absorb. For these reasons the rest of his visit was hurried and uneasy. In Naples the extreme limit of the conventional tour was reached. Conditions were really rough beyond Rome. In a vivid sentence Gibbon describes how "you are sometimes sunk in sloughs and sometimes racked and battered on the broken remains of the old Appian Way, and when after a tedious day you at last arrive at the long desired inn, you soon wish for the moment of setting out again". From Naples he claimed to have come away a better Englishman from what he had seen of the iniquities of the government. His way now lay by the Adriatic coast to Venice. Here confessedly his impression of the city as a place of ill-built houses, ruined pictures and stinking canals was due to worry and fatigue. The Mont Cenis was crossed once more, and in deference to his father's impatience Gibbon left Guise behind to visit Provence alone, and hastened north. Paris delayed him for a happy fortnight, after which he crossed to Dover, having been away two years and five months, and "drove through the summer dust and solitude of London" on his way to Buriton.

Gibbon set the seal to the conventional aspect of his tour by helping to form the Roman Club which for a time held the travellers of his year together. In their company he could recall that he had seen the right places, met the right people and seen the right pictures—"the miracles of the Caracci"

and other masters of the Seicento then in fashion. A little deeper, an eloquent tribute, in *The Decline and Fall*, to Paris, the centre of civilization, testifies to his memorable visit which confirmed rather than inspired his social and intellectual convictions. The crucial moment in Rome has held pride of place in the Italian tour at the expense of other details, partly because Gibbon himself treated them rather cursorily in his memoirs. The lasting impressions made by that journey are revealed rather by a host of reminiscent touches and apt observations scattered through his History. But that History had grown from its initial conception until it surveyed the movements of armies and peoples across Europe and Asia during a thousand years. One of the original and abiding merits of Gibbon's historical genius lies in the breadth and the exactitude of his geographical knowledge. In this vast design his own travels, so limited in comparison with modern possibilities, might seem a small factor. It is not really so. The scholar and indeed the soldier in him who had crossed the Alps twice could not but realize the difficulties with which whole armies contended. Gibbon, in fact, never makes the mistake of treating mountains to be scaled and rivers to be forded as merely common symbols of maps, and he knew what was the essential feature to extract from accounts of the remotest lands through an eye trained by what had been seen in the plains of Lombardy or among the Tuscan hills.

The Low Andes of Venezuela

by J. L. ALEXANDER



THE aspect of Venezuela most frequently presented by the few people who know the country well to the many who do not is, on the whole, an unpleasant one—a humid tropical climate, multitudes of carnivorous insects, reptiles which take up their abode in your larder or under your bed, oil and mining fields, and Andean tyrants with a taste for the finer arts of cruelty and misgovernment.

Such a view is decidedly unfair to the country which, in addition to being a vital source of petroleum for the Allies, has many attractive features. Caracas, the capital, is set in a valley of the westernmost spur of the Andes, 3500 ft. above sea-level and only an hour's drive, up twenty-five miles of serpentine road, from the port of La Guaira. The distance to the sea by the old mule track over the Sierra del Avila is only eight miles. Shut in between the mountains, the city is uncomfortably airless and hot during the greater part of the year. It enjoys a cool spell from December until March. In the old days, when retired diplomats decided that they had reached

an end of journeying and never wanted to leave this cradle of South American liberty, Caracas must have been an infinitely delightful place, both for its tranquillity and its beauty. Not so long ago Caracas was still in character a Spanish-Colonial town of low, tiled houses, built around spacious patios and gardens where orange blossom and jasmin scented the atmosphere, where bougainvilleas and goldenshower tumbled the sunlit walls—purple and bronze as the host of Darius—and life was slow and colourful in the narrow cobbled streets. That was Caracas as she ought to be—a city of red and gold, trees of vivid green to give shade from the tropical sun, baroque churches and plummy palms. But it is a Caracas which is fast disappearing before the onslaught of speculative builders and the fever for indiscriminate modernization.

The low Spanish houses with gently sloping roofs wide enough for a wagon to drive along, their hidden courts bright with flowers beneath cypresses and the pomegranates, are being superseded by box-like buildings that

fill the builder's breast with satisfied pride in the belief that he has produced something "American".

Outside the city limits, on the lower slopes of the mountains, stretch mile upon mile of modern suburbs and the villa-lined avenues of the Country Club. The people who live in these districts seldom look far afield for amusement and know the heights which tower above them only by sight and not with the intimacy that comes from having walked their paths and lived among their people. Latins have as a rule no love of walking; even in Granada one comes across few young people who care to spend their week-ends tramping over the spurs of the Sierra Nevada, and in the tropics walking for its own sake is generally regarded as an eccentricity. The number of English and Americans in the foreign colonies who care to explore the country beyond the built-up areas is usually small—they prefer the amenities of the golf club or the sandy discomfort of the beaches. There is a belief held by those who are used to a town life that the tropical countryside is unsuitable for walking, that one may be molested by wild animals or that snakes are liable to "jump out onto the path", that the grass is neck-high and "in any case there's nowhere to go and it's much too hot".

The loveliest parts of Venezuela are on the Colombian border in the state of Merida. But this district has the disadvantage of being more distant from Caracas than the lower outcrop, which stretches eastward between the capital and the coast and the lateral ranges and valleys which rise and fall, sharp-edged and deep-troughed like the waves of an angry sea, until they end in the scorching llanos where the vaqueros range with the great cattle herds and the stranger is as easily lost as in the deserts of Africa.

The Venezuelan highlands sheer up to narrow razor edges and fall away, sometimes gently enough for cultivation and sometimes almost precipitously to glens nearly a thousand feet below. The *haciendas* produce mainly citrus fruits, pineapple and yucca, and one is filled with wonder and admiration for the men and oxen who till these nearly vertical plantations. The majority of the big ranch owners are absentee landlords who leave their estates to the care of a bailiff. The dwellings on the *fincas* or smaller plantations are attractive but simple; built of unfinished beams and adobe, with Spanish tiles over mud-plastered bamboo for roofing, they are constructed in a few months, and their colour-washed walls soon mellow into their natural surroundings. The peons or campesinos live



Stanford, London

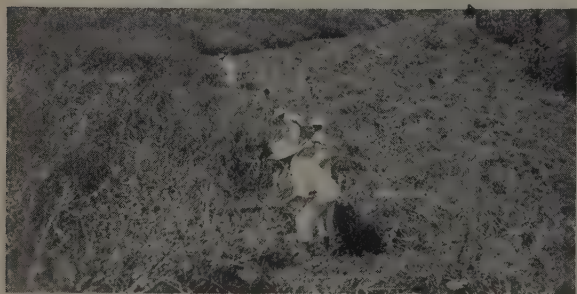
(Opposite) The Avila range, an outcrop of the Cordillera of the Andes which separates the valley of Caracas from the sea. (Below) University building in Caracas

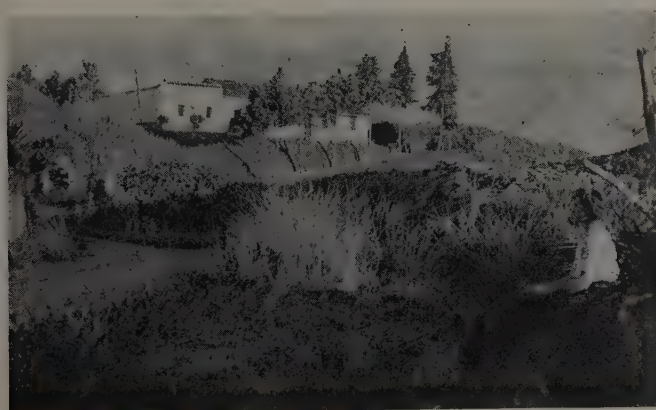


in far more primitive style, in poor huts of split sticks and daub with roofs of grass and weed. The interiors are usually such as to repel the fastidious, filled with smoke from an open fire and a host of unkempt children, pigs and fowls. Nevertheless these shacks can look beautiful; they are often built on one of the few flat spaces at the summit of the hills, surrounded by copses of coffee shrub, avocado pear, paw-paw and acacia, covered with flowers as yellow as our own buttercups, beneath whose shade the grass grows smooth and green. And one characteristic the English visitor notes with surprised delight as he is reminded of the cottage gardens of England—these people share with us a love of flowers. Spiraea and bougainvillea mantle their humble crofts; a profusion of roses, lilies, begonias, marguerites, dahlias, cannas and poinsettia surrounds the clearing and crowds close to the mud walls. The lean-to stoep is lined with tins, each containing a flowering plant.



(Left: 1) A pueblo or small town in the mountains of Miranda; (2) the farm buildings of a hacienda: on the hills behind, well cultivated pine-apple plantations can be seen; (3) a group of peons clearing the land ready for burning and planting; (4) cattle on a hacienda in the state of Miranda. Little cattle rearing is done on the haciendas owing to the prevalence of fruit-growing to which the land is well suited. The one shown here belongs to General Lopez Contreras who became President of Venezuela on the death of Gomez in 1935 and established the present democratic regime. (Opposite; top) Ploughing-in the pine-apple after its third year of fruiting. Yucca from which Cassava bread is made is planted in its place; (middle: left) house on General Lopez Contreras' hacienda, where the chief cultivation is of pine-apple and orange; (right) characteristic landscape in the State of Miranda: a peon is driving his oxen home after the day's work; (bottom: left) a ranchero and his wife travelling in the mountains. Mules and horses are still the chief means of transport in the low Andes of Venezuela; (right) boys, such as this one, and the donkeys carry surprisingly heavy weights on their backs





One can walk or ride at will over the mountains; mule tracks and paths wind in every direction. The country varies pleasantly from orderly orange groves in the wider valleys, pineapple, banana and yucca on the hillsides to wood and open grassland. The sun is hot but there is always a breeze and an abundance of magnificent views to reward the climb up the steep trail bordered by wild flowers, bramble and bracken and the white budded sisal. At one moment, looking across the deep ravines to rocky crags and emerald steeps where the sunlight makes a rainbow in a cool cascade, one is reminded of Switzerland in summertime; at another, when only the more rounded slopes covered with brown-tinted grass are in view, of the Sussex Downs. The path begins to descend and as the ridges, modelled and defined as if by some titanic sculptor, and the little huts surrounded by their hedges of hibiscus and plantings of maize come into view hundreds of feet below, you realize that the Venezuelan landscape is quite distinct and that any parallel is a delusion. Sometimes the kite wheels beneath and the drifting clouds shut out the sunlight from the valleys while leaving the uplands in full splendour.

The woodlands might, in the distance, be

English coverts, but when you come near you could not mistake their vegetation for anything but tropical, and the contrast with the open country is all the more striking. Slender palms wave gently above an infinite variety of trees and shrubs, most of which are remarkable for the whiteness of their trunks and the decorative beauty of their leaves. Some of these are shaped like the fans held by slave girls in the pseudo-classical paintings of ancient Egypt fashionable in the last century. Parasite orchids and lianas hang from the branches and tree ferns and hart's-tongue flourish in the shaded loam. There are many varieties of smaller birds, flocks of little green parakeets screech overhead and a bright blue or yellow plume gleams like a jewel as the shadow is pierced by a shaft of sunlight. The monkeys have mostly fled to less inhabited parts and their absence seems strange in such a setting. Butterflies there are in abundance, and one especially fine variety of giant blue with a six-inch wing span is to be seen flitting slowly in the cool of the woods.

The campesinos are mainly of mixed descent—a dash of negro and Indian with predominantly Mediterranean blood. They know nothing of luxury and live on a diet of maize, beans, rice, plantain and cassava,



All photographs by the Author

seldom tasting meat except when they kill one of the precious pigs which nose round their huts. Their main diversion is the game of bowls, played on different principles from our own. They throw a small ball at random on a pitch that may be like a ploughed field by comparison with the English greens; the bowls are rolled across unpredictable hazards towards it, with considerable skill and judgment.

The chief fiesta of each pueblo during the year is held in honour of its own particular patron Saint. These jollifications usually last about four days and consist of religious processions, boxing matches in the plaza, the continual explosion of rockets by day and night—perhaps to make sure that the celebrations do not pass unnoticed by the Saint, but it becomes a little shattering and, to the European, reminiscent of grimmer things at home—a mild form of horse-racing through the streets, and, the *pièce de résistance*—a bull-fight by the local talent. This is, in practice, a free-for-all and has about it much more baiting than fighting.

The most important accoutrement of the campesino is his machete, very occasionally used as a weapon, with hideous effect, in a drunken quarrel. But the people are, on the whole, sober, and though not over-energetic they plod along—clearing virgin scrub and fallow land with these sword-like knives, hoeing ever-recurring weeds beneath the orange trees or ploughing-in the sterile pineapple to prepare for the planting of yucca. Produce in the country is dear, as the best of everything goes to the city markets; green vegetables are transported out to the hill pueblos from the more fertile vale of Caracas. De-

spite the poverty of the people, one feature of the villages is surprising: there is not just one village store but a host of competing *bodegas*. The owners do not become rich but the retail trade seems to have a strong attraction for the Venezuelan. In one small township I counted twenty-two such stores, all selling identical produce: rum, dried fish, cord, national and some United States tinned foods, and the essential beans and rice. Everywhere one is surprised to find little bodegas where a welcome bottle of beer or kola can be bought.

Rain is abundant, the water supplies are good, and even the pueblos are lit by electricity. In the mountains the nights are cool and the days never oppressive; there is little risk of catching diseases with which the tropics are generally associated. Typhoid is extremely rare and malaria is unknown. There is nothing to arouse the interest of the archaeologist or anthropologist, but Venezuela is a paradise for the botanist or the bug-hunter. Many insects and small reptiles look like creatures from the worst possible nightmare: white frogs with enormous yellow eyes, unwebbed feet, and fingers like a lemur; insects and moths that are miracles of natural camouflage and a grotesqueness that is an endless source of fascination. The grasshopper species is especially interesting and varied.

Humboldt spent some time exploring and collecting in the hills around Caracas, and there is today a great field for naturalists in country which is easy to reach and merits a visit from anyone who calls at La Guaira or Caracas and wishes to spend some of his time away from the cities in the fresh mountain air.

(Opposite) Outside a country bodega (store).
(Right) The tiled roof of an old colonial style hacienda. In the foreground are some banana leaves



Two Commonwealths

The following Isotype charts will appear in Two Commonwealths, the second of three volumes entitled "The Soviets and Ourselves", published by Harrap and produced by Adprint. In it the author will compare the political and social evolution, and the contemporary institutions, of the Soviet Union and the British Commonwealth. He suggests some points of comparison below

THESE charts bring out two very simple but fundamentally important facts about Great Britain and the U.S.S.R. The first is that industrialization took place in Russia much later than in Great Britain: there was almost as large a proportion of town-dwellers in this country in 1800 as in the U.S.S.R. even today. The second is that the U.S.S.R., a compact land-mass, is all but self-sufficient economically—more so than the far-flung British Empire; whilst the United Kingdom itself is dependent on maritime trade for many vital raw materials.

These economic facts have had social consequences. In England towns have been expanding at the expense of the countryside for 200 years, and for generations the mass of the population of our tiny island has taken urban civilization for granted. In Russia this development has occupied only the last two generations. In 1917 three out of every four Russians still dwelt in isolated villages, alternating between exhausting manual toil in summer and ignorant lethargy in winter. Electricity, the radio, tractors, seemed to them no less revolutionary than the Bolsheviks who brought them. What we used to regard as the "Asiatic" features of Russia, the "technical backwardness" and "Slav fatalism" of which racial theorists made so much, are now seen to have been the inevitable concomitants of a civilization still largely innocent of machines.

The rapid industrialization of Russia in recent decades has had important military consequences. Tsarist Russia's economic collapse in the last war was due to her dependence on imported armaments and to her inability to produce, store and distribute equitably the food she produced. The first problem has been solved by state control of industrial production and a strong emphasis on heavy industry in the Five Year Plans; the second problem was solved by collectivization. Instead of the 25 million scattered peasant households of 1914, producing with primitive implements a tiny surplus which was hoarded in time of scarcity, the U.S.S.R. faced this war with 250,000 highly mechanized collective farms. Their output made it possible to feed the new industrial towns: they are as essential to the Soviet war effort as the Merchant Navy to ours.

Britain's dependence on her Merchant Navy, whether in peace or war, is evident from the second chart. Ten symbols for wheat are shown arriving in Britain against four grown here. No corresponding movement within the land-mass of the Soviet Union is shown by the third chart; and in fact it is largely prevented by geography. Bulky goods are far more costly to transport by land than by sea; and while the urbanization of Britain was based on the sea-borne flow of food and raw materials, no single area of the Soviet Union could exert a comparable attraction. Russia's urban population, therefore, has not only grown: it has moved. In the last fifteen years new towns have sprung up in Siberia and Central Asia, drawing previously nomadic tribes into factory life. Social and economic reasons, as well as strategic foresight, produced this great Eastward shift of the centre of Soviet industrial power; and, fortunately for us, preserved the Red Army's ability to fight when the old manufacturing areas had been overrun.

A further point is made by the second chart; of the ten symbols for wheat arriving in Great Britain, four represent imports from foreign countries, while the Dominions which produce the other six are seen to produce also large quantities available for export elsewhere. Similar considerations apply to other raw materials: Britain buys heavily outside the Commonwealth countries, and consumes only a fraction of their exportable surplus. Thus the economic life of the components of the British Commonwealth is inextricably mingled with that of non-British countries, over whose politics they have no direct influence. This fact inhibits any arrangements between the Commonwealth countries in which other countries do not participate; and, together with their individual political autonomy, hampers the development of unified economic or social planning within the Commonwealth.

A single government, on the other hand, controls the economic policies of all the producing areas of the Soviet Union: all its components have a part in formulating them, and there is a natural tendency for them to take shape as plans for development from which other countries are excluded.

K. E. HOLME

Urbanization of Great Britain

1800



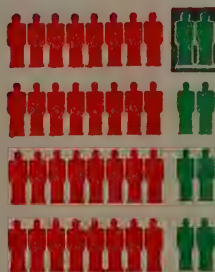
1850



1900

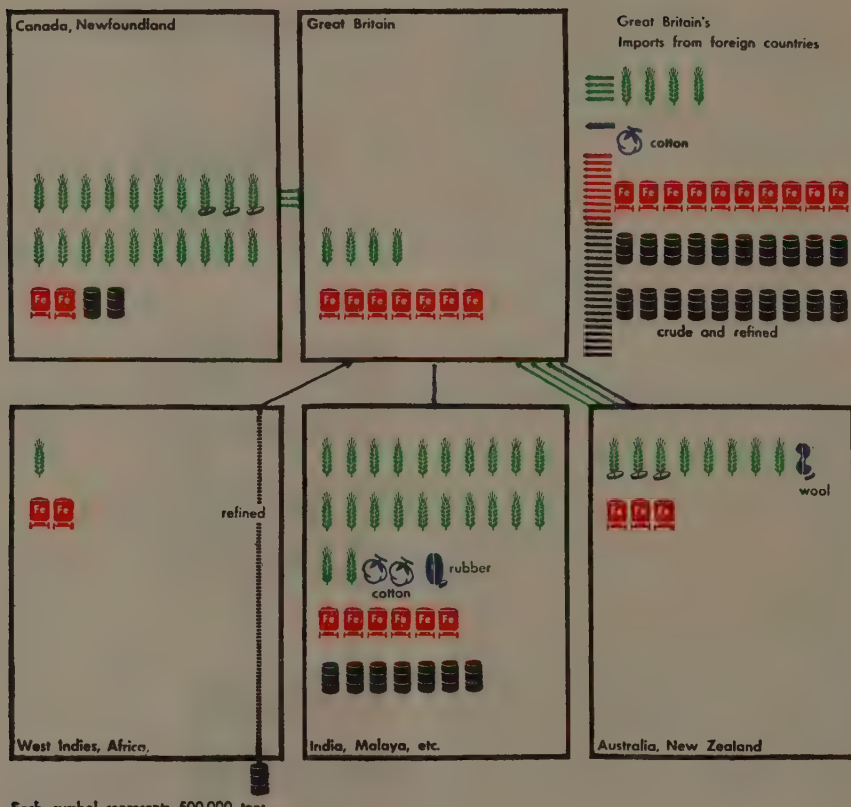


1940



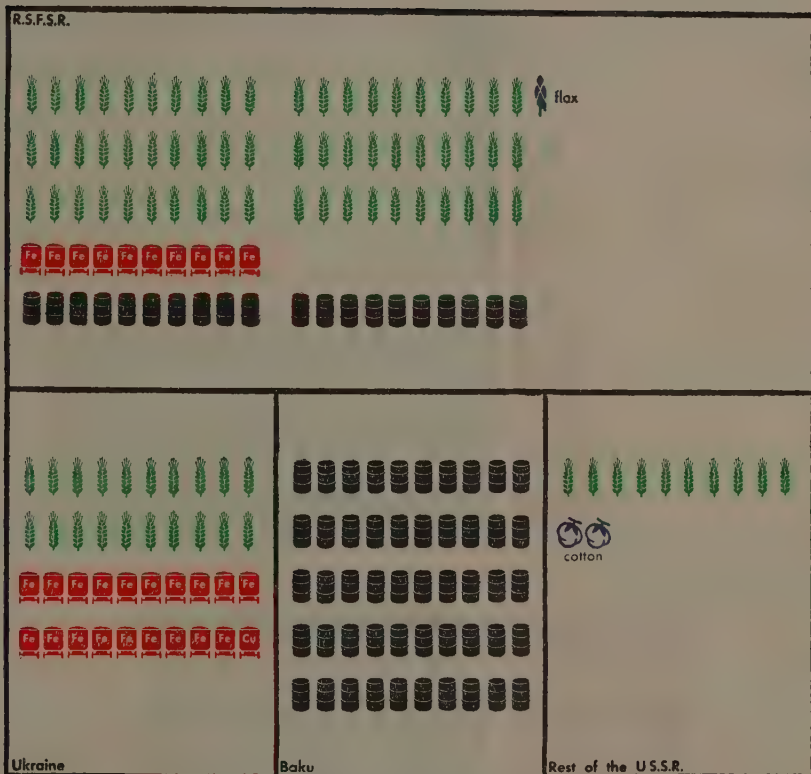
Each man symbol represents 1 million people
 Red: urban green: rural on black: owning land

Some Raw Materials in the British Commonwealth



Each symbol represents 500,000 tons
 green: wheat red: iron-ore black: oil blue: fibres and rubber
 on black ship: exported to Great Britain

in the Soviet Union



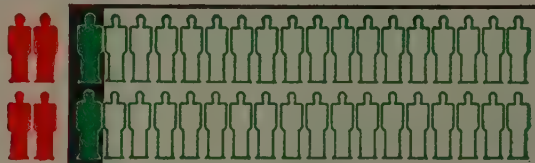
Urbanization of Russia



1800



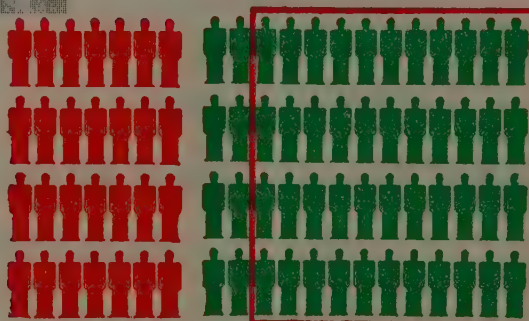
1860



1900



1940



Each man symbol represents 2 million people
 Red: urban green: rural on black area; landowners
 surrounded by black line: serfs
 surrounded by red line: collective farmers

Folk at Hamar

by PETER JAMIESON

I WAS not very old, barely eleven, but I was carrying a load of peats on my back. I was with my mother and my aunt, her sister Mern. They both carried loads of peats, in straw baskets, with shoulder-bands. These baskets are called kishies. A kishie can hold quite a heavy burden of peat. I was carrying my load in a smaller basket, made of cane. The cane felt hard on my back as I had nothing on but a woollen slip under my blue jersey.

I walked along, trying to keep up with the women, but for all their burdens they seemed to walk at a good pace. They both knitted as they walked, and all the time they kept talking.

I caught snatches of their talk. I wondered what it could mean, for sometimes they lowered their voices as if not wanting me to hear them. I made out something about the girl in our neighbours' house. Her name was Helen, the third lass of the family. Well, I heard the women speaking of Helen and of a man who had gone away south to sail. I had always liked Helen. She was a bonny-cheeked, blue-eyed girl, maybe a year younger than my brother, Magnus, who was sailing in a ship from Liverpool.

Magnus was nineteen. He had been at sea for about two years. I minded it fine, as I had cried the night he went in the mail-boat to go away. My younger brother and my sisters had cried as well. My father and mother, forbye Aunt Mern, and my grandfather and grandmother—who stayed in the small biggin a little distance north by our house—all wanted Magnus to stay at home until he was a bit older. He had a good enough job in the shop. Magnus was not caring to stay at home. He had always wanted to go to sea. I mind him taking us off in the small boat one day. We were nearly drowned, the five of us, when a gust of wind came tearing off the hill. Magnus shouted to us to sit still. He managed to keep the boat afloat, but it was a near thing. None of us children were eager for voyages on the voc after that, unless when my father was at the helm. We never felt afraid when he was in the boat.

Magnus went away and shipped in a large steamer under a Shetland master, Captain Williamson by name. Well, Helen was at

school with my brother Magnus. I mind them saying Magnus was very fond of her, and bought her sugar gundy from the shop; but we were all very fond of her. I heard my Aunt Mern saying "bairn", but some peats fell from my basket and I stopped to adjust my load. I could not understand why the women were speaking so much about our neighbour folk. I hoped there was nothing in the way of sickness or other ill news at the Hamar. That was what they called Helen's folk's croft. Our croft was called Gunnarsberg. It seemed to us children to be a funny kind of a name to give to a stony patch of soil, so unproductive that my father and his father before him had had to go to the lines to make a living. There was a man in a small house at the head of the valley who said it was an old name, the place where a hero had once lived.

I often wondered about this Gunnar. Magnus had sent home a book and there was something in this book about a man named Gunnar. My father read the book to us about the nights. I mind it said something about the corn-fields are white to harvest and the home meadows are mown. I wondered if this could be the same man. My mother would laugh and shake her head. She said she could hardly think of a hero bidding in the Dale of Hamar. I mind what my aunt had said to this: "Faith, lass, I wouldn't say that! It takes heroes to bide in the Dale of Hamar!" They all laughed at her, and I mind my father nodding his head and saying: "The words of truth!" He said he would go up along "old Tom of the Daal" with the book, and ask him what it meant.

Tom was said to be a scholar and had a lot of books. I was once inside his house at the Daal. He lived by himself and tilled a rig or two for potatoes and cabbages, and kept one cow. The house was not very clean. There was a peculiar musty smell about the small room. The window was cracked and thick with dust. He had some books on a shelf near the fire. The dust was lying thick on them. He also had rare curios, from the South Sea isles, they said. The night I was there with Magnus, he was sitting reading a book and aye writing notes on a scrap of paper. He was a good fiddler, too. That night he played what he called "springs" and

get us to dance on the floor. I minded this clearly, for he gave us a penny each. Thomas Shewan they called him. He had been sailing for years, and now all his people were dead and he lived by himself. I would often see him going to the shop, some seven miles south from the dale. He always went up the hill track, over the western berg as they called the hill, and always had a thick staff with him.

I got my basket into position again and hurried after the women. They still spoke away, and always their hands moved quickly as they knitted. I kept up with them but I heard no more about Helen of Hamar. I was glad indeed when we reached the biggin at Gunnarsberg, for I felt tired.

It was a good distance we had to go for our peats, maybe a mile and a half. We always had a stack built near the house for the winter-firing, forbye a stack for the busy Voar days; but when the weather was anything favourable we went to the stacks in the hill, near the banks on the moor, for fuel. This was to hain upon, or save, the winter-firing. My mother emptied out her kishie, then came and lifted my basket off my back. She smiled and patted my head. "You'll be tired, my bairn; run in, and see what the bairns are doing." My aunt left her kishie standing on the stack. She handed me her knitting and went up to the hill-gate behind the house for the kye were standing there, lowing impatiently, rubbing themselves against the fencing, and agglin themselves in the guttery pools that stood at the grinnd. My mother stood a while looking towards the voe, as the boats were beginning to come in from sea, then followed my aunt to the hill. It was always like that on that wearied croft. There was very little time for a spell between jobs.

I went in and put the knitting on the shelf where my aunt kept her worsted. It was near our bed in the ben-room. A fire was burning in the open fireplace whose white-washed sides and hearthstone gleamed white and cheery. The flames from the hard blue peats leapt brightly so that the whole room was lit up. I closed the door and went through the narrow passage-way separating the ben-room from the living-room. Here in the passage-way stood our pails of water from the well, churn of sour blaand and pots and

pans. My two sisters and younger brother were sitting on the bench which stood along the wall of the room facing the little window. My oldest sister, Jane, was knitting. The other one was doing her home lessons. I had to smile for I'd never even started to mine. My brother ran to meet me and started a playful pummelling. We wrestled on the floor for a while, then said we'd smoke the pipe of peace! We then both sat down to our books. The little clock on the mantelpiece ticked on furiously. It was as if it were having a race with my father's watch hanging from a nail near the clock. My grandfather, old Magnus, was sitting on the end of the bench nearest the fire, where the kettle sang merrily on the warm shining stove. The old man was sitting bent forward, his hands held out to the fire. "You've been to the stack, my boy," he greeted me, looking up at me as I sat reading at the other side of the stove. "What saw du there at the Daal this day, bairn? Spoke you with any of the folk south there? Where's Mern and your mother gone?"

I mumbled something about seeing the Johnson folk up in the seggie pund, gripping their mare, the Clarks coming from the shop, old John not very steady on his feet, and Laura Tait from Northoose leading home her red cow, and wearing her best hat. My grandfather smiled, nodded, and lit his pipe. "That Laura! And those Clarks! I warn John'll be like that now for a day or two, now they've sold the cow. What a man is that! Well, seeing you're all reading, I may as well read too."

He reached up on the mantelpiece for a well-thumbed book. It was an old book called *Life's Evening*, and the old man never tired of reading its pages.

I looked up on hearing the shuffle of feet at the door. It was my grandmother, old Mern. My sisters went to meet her. She was old and frail, but still able to come hirplin on her staff, as they say, from one house to the other. Old Magnus looked up, smiling. He kept the place in the book with his forefinger while he made room for grandmother. "Well, lass, you've won here too! Have you seen the lasses?"

"They're up in the pund taking in the kye, my lamb," she said. I looked at her. I could not but notice her voice was failing rapidly. Taking up her wires she began to

knit, slowly at first and every little while holding up the knitting to the light as if afraid the loops were slipping. My oldest sister also began knitting, while Agnes, the younger, went to set the table for tea.

"Saw du Kind Hannah, my bairn, when you passed by to the stack?" my grandmother asked, looking across at me.

I nodded, and smiled as I spoke: "That did I. Hannah was at the well when we passed the door. The dog began barking and snarling at us, but Hannah shook her staff at him. We stood a little speaking to her. She's thinking of selling the gimmers."

"Oh, that would Hannah!" nodded my grandmother, chuckling: "she'd speak all day and all night, too, into the bargain. What's she saying now, bairn?"

"Likely a lot of folly, as usual with Kind Hannah," laughed the old man, bending to kindle his pipe anew.

"There's a letter come from Magnus, John," my brother said to me, with bright eyes. He pointed to the letter on the mantelpiece, near the clock.

"Yes, it's from Magnus," said Jane. I was going to rise and open it, when my mother came in with some milk in a pail, followed by Aunt Mern. They both sat down to rest for a little. I went and gave the letter to my mother.

"Poor bairns, ye'll surely be tired!" said old Mern. Aunt Mern went and sat beside her, patting the worn hands.

My mother opened the letter. She read it to us. Magnus was well and liking the ship. The master was a really fine fellow, well liked by the crew. The grub was O.K., and the fo'c'sle not too bad, considering. They were loading cargo for Boston, Mass. He hoped all at home were well and sent his kindest regards to us all.

"Poor bairn! The Lord watch over him!" said the old man. Old Mern sighed and nodded: "So be that, this day!"

Someone was coming in. We all looked eagerly towards the door. It was my father, Young Magnus, as the folk called him. He stood on the middle of the floor, a big, broad-shouldered man, slightly stooping as the ceiling of the little room almost touched his soiled peaked cap. His thick fair hair showed in the light, as if bronze-tinged, when he took off his cap. He was in oilskins and carried some

fish and a tangled haddock line in a wooden skull. Some hooks were dangling over the side of the skull. My brother ran to take a starfish off one of the hooks. He did not heed my father who told him he might catch his fingers in the hooks. He came running back to show me and Agnes the starfish. We did not hear the folk's conversation as we bent to examine the big prickly starfish, wondering what we should do with it.

After tea, in the darkening of the hūmen, or twilight, Young Magnus took me and my brother down to the boat. She was a small craft, fitted with a motor-engine, and with a little wheelhouse aft, with a board with the name *Sea Flower* in gilt letters on it. Four men made up the crew. My father was skipper. The men had gone home, so we had the boat to ourselves. Young Magnus took a new-baited line down with him. The old man had baited the line. It was grand, we thought, playing there aboard the boat. My brother almost fell over the side in his eager capers, making on he was the skipper, shouting "Vast heavin'" and what not. I did not feel any tiredness then. I wished we could have set out in the boat with our father, to the Skerries haaf; but after a while he had finished his work and bade us come away. It was dark when we left the boat, the waves lapping her green-painted sides where she lay moored alongside the Taits' little *Balder* at the little pier. Here and there in the valley we could see lights flaring up and blinking as folk lit their lamps. Some were outside, carrying lanterns, the lights swinging eerily, at times vanishing, then reappearing suddenly as folk came round the dykes and lamb-houses. We passed our lamb-house, hearing the lambs yarning drowsily. Then further on we passed the byre door, the kye lowing softly as if bidding us good-night.

I followed my grandfather over to the little house, where Aunt Mern had already led the old woman across. Grandfather dropped his book at the door, and I picked it up, the old man kissing me and saying I was a good peerie boy for finding him his battered *Life's Evening*.

A light showed in the voc. We could hear a motor chugging and spluttering. It was the Menson men's big haddock-boat making for the sea. I stood and watched the light, not free from thoughts of envy. I longed to be a bit bigger, so that I could go to the lines. I

thought of Magnus getting ready to sail across the Atlantic. My mother opened the door and a slant of light fell across the brig and the homefield toonmal where our midden stood. A whaup scampered in the hill and I started, Aunt Mern's trowy tales coming to my mind. I went inside to find my father had gone to

bed. My brother was already asleep, and mother, after tidying up, sat down to her spinning. My sisters sat speaking softly together. The whirring of the wheel seemed to make me drowsy, so I went ben, threw off my clothes and was soon fast asleep beside my brother.



Glossary

Agglin: *soiling*

Blaand: *a sharp, satisfying drink made by blending buttermilk with boiling water. It stands in a wooden 'kirn' or churn*

Gimmer: (*pronounced 'gjimmer', or rather 'gyimmer'*) *a female sheep in her second year*

Grinnnd: *gate; passage through a dyke*

Haaf: *the open sea clear of the land; the fishing carried on at the 'far sea'*

Hirplin: *walking with a feeble gait, as an old person*

Peerie: *little; small*

Pund: *an enclosure for animals*

Rig: *a field of arable land*

Seggie pund: *an enclosure where a lot of the 'seggies', or yellow irises, grow*

Toonmal: *the grass land near the croft-houses; the space between the houses and the arable land*

Trowy: *fairy (from 'trow', or troll)*

Voar: *Springtime, the seed time; the work of delving and sowing; all the Springtime work*

Voe: *an arm of the sea eating into the land*

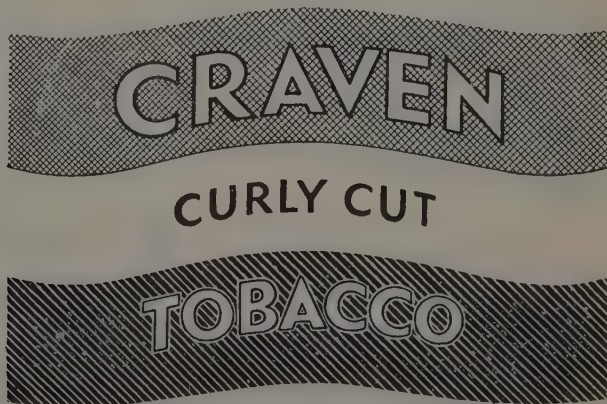
Whaup: *curlew*

Wooden skull: *shallow, open box with half-rounded bottom for holding baited lines*



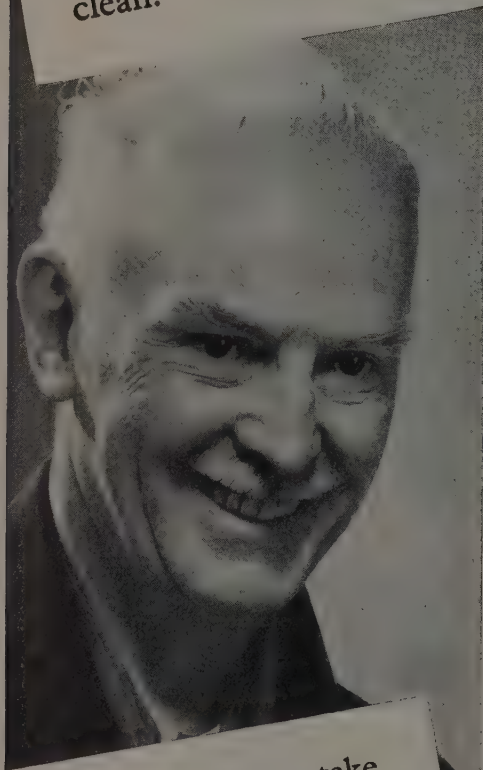
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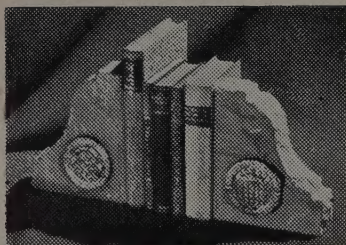


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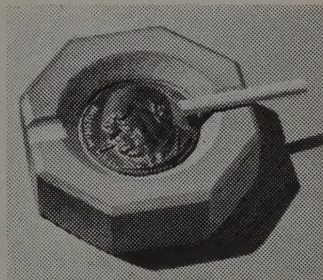
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